

Lesson 20

When we ended last week, we were looking at the little horn from verses 9-12.

And we saw that this little horn could not be the same little horn from Daniel 7 because that little horn would arise from the fourth kingdom (Rome) while this little horn in Daniel 8 would arise from the third kingdom (Greece).

So who is this little horn from Daniel 8? Last week we listed 10 clues about his identity.

There is only one Greek ruler who fits all ten of these clues. The little horn of Daniel 8 must be Antiochus IV Epiphanes of the Seleucid Empire.

Who was Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and why must he be the little horn of Daniel 8?

As we said earlier, after the death of Alexander, Ptolemy and his successors established themselves in Egypt and at first controlled Palestine as well. The Seleucids controlled Mesopotamia and Syria. There was constant friction between these two groups, and as was often the case, Palestine became a battlefield. In 200 BC, the Seleucids gained Palestine from the Ptolemies at the Battle of Panias.

Initially the Seleucid rule was popular with the Jews. According to Josephus, Antiochus III eased the tax burden considerably. However, he soon came in conflict with Rome and after several defeats was forced to pay a large annual indemnity. This meant that he had to tax the Jews more heavily, and understandably his popularity began to wane.

Antiochus III was killed in 187 BC while raiding a temple treasury in Elam to pay off the Romans. His successor, Seleucus IV, continued this policy by plotting unsuccessfully to rob the temple treasury in Jerusalem. He was assassinated in 175 BC. This period gave rise to Jewish opposition and the gradual emergence of a Jewish nationalistic movement.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes came to power after the death of his brother, Seleucus IV. He needed to unify his empire against the threats of Rome to the west, Parthia to the east, and Egypt to the south. Antiochus sought to accomplish this unity by fostering Hellenism; that is, by encouraging the adoption of Greek culture and ideals.

Antiochus particularly identified with Zeus and took the name Theos Epiphanes ("the god appearing")

because he considered himself to be a divine personification of Zeus. Due to the Roman taxes, Antiochus was virtually penniless when he assumed the throne, so he increased taxes and continued to rob temples.

Although they all disliked the taxes, the Jews were divided about Hellenism. Younger Jews were eager to adopt Greek culture and integrate it into Jewish society, but most older Jews were uncompromising traditionalists.

Matters came to a head in Jerusalem when two men tried to out bribe each other in an effort to have Antiochus make them High Priest. The winner supported the establishment of a Greek gymnasium within sight of the temple. There, young men (including priests) studied Greek culture and took part in sports. The intertestamental book of First Maccabees contains the following description:

Whereupon they built a place of exercise at Jerusalem according to the custom of the heathen. And made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen.

Greek sports were conducted without clothing. Also, when First Maccabees says that they made themselves uncircumcised, it is not just speaking figuratively. Some of the Jews actually tried to reverse their circumcision with surgery.

Later, the High Priest (who had obtained that position by paying Antiochus a bribe) assisted the king in plundering the temple and said nothing while Antiochus murdered citizens and nearly destroyed the city. An altar to Zeus was built in the temple and sacrifices were offered on it. And that was not all.

Antiochus issued decrees forbidding the practice of Jewish religion on pain of torture and death; the Sabbath and the festivals were not to be observed and circumcision was forbidden; copies of the Torah were to be destroyed and Jews were to be forced to offer sacrifices to Zeus and eat the meat of the sacrifice. Pigs were deliberately chosen as the sacrificial animals because they were considered unclean by the Jews.

One elderly priest, Mattathias, refused to sacrifice to Zeus and, with his five sons, he rose up and killed the king's officers who were trying to force him to comply. This event led to the Maccabean Revolt, which eventually gave rise to the first independent Jewish nation since before the Babylonian captivity. This nation lasted only 79 years. In 63 BC, the Romans under Pompey conquered Jerusalem and once again the Jews were under foreign domination.

Now, let's look at those clues again. Who is the Little Horn of Daniel 8?

Clue #1: He arose from one of the four pieces of the Greek kingdom that came about after Alexander's death (verses 8-9).

Antiochus came from the Seleucid Empire, which was established by Seleucus, one of Alexander's generals after his death.

Clue #2: He grew great toward the south, the east, and the glorious land (verse 9).

This clue accurately describes the expansion of the Seleucids. The "glorious land" is Palestine, which they took from Ptolemy.

Clue #3: He was able to cast down some of the host of the stars and the host of heaven (verse 10).

The phrases "stars of heaven" and the "host of heaven" refer to the people of God, the faithful Jews. This symbol of stars for the Jews may point back to the promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:5. Antiochus caused many "stars of heaven" to fall as he caused them to renounce their covenant with God.

Clue #4: He greatly magnified himself (verse 11).

Antiochus declared himself to be the divine personification of the Greek god Zeus. He called himself Theos Epiphanes, which means "God Manifest."

Verse 11 says that he "magnified himself even to the prince of the host." The prince of the host is God or perhaps Christ.

Not only did Antiochus consider himself God's equal, he set himself against God. Antiochus believed that he and his Greek gods were above God, and he attacked God and God's people.

Antiochus commanded that the Jews refrain from following the Jewish law. He desecrated the temple. He required allegiance to himself and the Greek gods rather than to God. As verse 11 says, Antiochus "magnified himself even to the prince of the host."

Clue #5: He took away the burnt offerings (verse 11).

The Hebrew in verse 11 simply says that the daily was taken away. That is, the daily activities of the priests were stopped. As we have seen, Antiochus did just that.

Clue #6: He overthrew the sanctuary (verse 11).

Antiochus looted the temple and set up an altar to Zeus in the sanctuary.

Clue #7: He was a king of bold countenance (verse 23).

Even the Roman Pompey refused to disrupt the Jewish worship, but not so with Antiochus. He definitely had a bold countenance.

Clue #8: He understood riddles or dark sentences (verse 23).

A better translation is that he was skilled at double dealings. Again, this was true of Antiochus. History tells us that he was extremely crafty and devious.

Clues #9 and #10: He had great power, and he caused great destruction (verse 24).

This, of course, as we have seen was also true of Antiochus. He had great power, and he used that power to destroy.

So where are we?

Antiochus IV Epiphanes is the little horn that arose out of the Greek empire and persecuted the people of God ruthlessly. He overthrew the sanctuary and caused the daily sacrifices to end. He caused many of God's people to fall by causing them to renounce their covenant with God in favor of Greek culture and Greek gods.

Verse 12 gives us the reason behind Antiochus' success. It was through transgression. These events didn't occur because God lacked power. These events occurred largely because the people were evil. They followed Antiochus in accepting Greek ideas, and they allowed Antiochus to do what he did.

Verse 12 tells us that Antiochus cast the truth down to the ground. He forbid the teaching of the law, and he tried to destroy the law. According to 1 Maccabees 1:56-57:

| The books of the law which they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire. Where the book

of the covenant was found in the possession of any one, or if any one adhered to the law, the decree of the king condemned him to death.

Antiochus was neither the first nor the last person who tried to destroy the word of God. It has happened many times, but all who try come up against the same fact:

1 Peter 1:24-25 - For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever.

Daniel 8:13-14

13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? 14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

Daniel hears a "holy one" or "saint" (probably an angel) ask how long the sanctuary and the people would be trampled underfoot. A second "holy one" provides the answer - the sanctuary will be restored after 2300 days (literally 2300 "evenings and mornings").

The phrase "how long" reminds of us of the same question in Revelation 6.

Revelation 6:10 - And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

As we mentioned earlier, that verse has been called the theme of the book of Revelation. Here we have the same question, "How long?," but the answer we get in verse 14 is curious - 2300 days. What does that mean?

The 2300 days of verse 14 presents one of the most difficult interpretive problems in the book of Daniel - and, not surprisingly, the commentaries are all over the map on what it means!

As for clearly wrong views of the 2300 days, they are numerous. Here is one example.

The Millerites were followers of William Miller, who in 1833 decided that Jesus would return in 1843. Why? He started with 457 BC (which is about the year that Ezra led the second return from exile, with

the return under Cyrus being the first and the return in Nehemiah being the third), and then he counted forward 2300 years based on verse 14 and based also on the "year-day method" of Biblical interpretation (about which we will soon have much more to say). Christ's failure to return as Miller predicted became known as the Great Disappointment, out of which arose the Seventh-Day Adventists, and eventually the Branch Davidians. So, yes, we can draw a straight line between Miller's false views of verse 14 and the events that happened in Waco in 1993.

Yes, it matters what we believe about Daniel. And, yes, it matters when people purport to know when Jesus will return even when the Bible tells us that Jesus himself does not know when that day will be (Mark 13:32). We can see what happens when false teaching such as that creates the inevitable "great disappointments."

Before we try to determine what is meant by the 2300 days, let's ask another question: what would we expect the answer to the question "how long?" to be? How long will God's people be trodden under foot? Elsewhere with similar questions we have seen God answer "not long," and we have seen God provide comfort by telling his people that their troubles will be only temporary. Perhaps we should not be surprised if we see a similar answer here.

We are going to look at three possible explanations for the 2300 days, at least two of which are wrong, but I don't think we will be able to say definitively which of those three is right.

Why is Miller's view a false teaching if we can't say for sure what the 2300 days means? Because not being able to say for sure what something means is very different from not being able to say for sure what it does not mean!

We know that Miller's view was wrong because it violates other Scriptures - namely, Mark 13:32, which tells us that not even Jesus knows that day of his return. It also violates the Scriptures that tell us Jesus' return will not come with signs but instead will come as a thief in the night. Also, we know that Jesus did not return in 1843, which means that Miller falls under the condemnation of all false prophets:

Deuteronomy 18:22 - When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

And worse, Miller's false teaching about Daniel would put Daniel under that same condemnation if Miller had been correct about what Daniel was saying - but, of course, Miller was not correct.

So, back to the 2300 days in Daniel 8:14. That 2300 day period is the answer we are given to the question of how long the sanctuary will be trodden under foot until it is cleansed. Literally, the answer is "evening, morning, two thousand and three hundred." What does the 2300 days mean? Is it literal or figurative?

We have at least three choices:

- The "evening, morning" could refer to the evening and morning sacrifices, in which case 2300 evening and morning sacrifices would occur over a literal 1150 days, with possibly a figurative meaning as well.
- The "evening, morning" could be taken as a Hebrew day (as in Genesis 1, "there was evening and there was morning") so that we have a literal 2300 days, with possibly a figurative meaning as well.
- The number 2300 could be entirely figurative with no literal counterpart.

View #1: Under this view, the time period is a literal 1150 days, which would be three years and 55 days (1150 days contain 1150 mornings and 1150 evenings for a grand total of 2300 mornings and evenings).

This view is appealing in that the altar to Zeus was set up in the temple about 1150 days before it was cleansed. Historians tell us that the period between desecration and rededication was 1106 days, but we can't be sure of the point of the initial desecration in view here, and it is possible that the Bible is rounding the numbers.

View #2: Under this view, the time period is a literal 2300 days, which would be a little over six years and 100 days.

Some commentators argue that a Hebrew reader would never have understood the language in verse 14 to refer to only 1150 days. They point out that when the Bible wants to express half days it uses two numbers, as in 40 days and 40 nights (Genesis 7:4). So under this view verse 14 is referring to 2300 days.

But a problem with this view is that nothing really notable (that we know about) occurred six years and 100 days before the temple was cleansed. Antiochus came to the throne in 175 BC, and some

argue that his persecution of the Jews started around 170 BC, which is about six years prior to 164 BC. But the appointment of the High Priest by bribery and the construction of the Greek gymnasium near the temple all occurred prior to 170 BC, and in fact Antiochus was busy fighting the sixth Syrian War against the Ptolemies in 170 BC, with the real persecution picking up with his return in 168 BC - so the date of 170 BC for the beginning of the persecution seems to be without much basis.

View #3: Under this view, the time period of 2300 days is entirely figurative.

But there is a problem with this view - the number 2300 is not an obvious symbolic number or a multiple of such numbers.

The period of 2300 days is a little over six years (which falls just short of the perfect seven). If we instead take 1150 days, then we are a little short of three and a half years (a broken seven). Both of those figures are used elsewhere to refer to a persecution that is temporary.

Either 2300 days falling short of 7 years or 1150 days falling short of 3.5 years would stress the same point - this persecution would end; it would not be permanent. And that is just what we would expect the answer to be.

My View: I think either View #1 (a literal 1150 days) or View #3 (a figurative 1150 days being just short of 3.5 years) is correct, and I slightly favor View #3 over View #1.

But why do I prefer 1150 days over 2300 days? The phrase "evenings and mornings" in place of "days" is a key phrase here, and I think it stresses that the removal of the "daily" sacrifices was the center of attention in this event. Verse 26 refers to the vision as the vision of the evening and the morning.

And why do I prefer the symbolic view? Our guideline is that we choose the symbolic meaning in apocalyptic language unless we have a really good reason to do otherwise. A literal 1150 days makes sense, so that is an option, but the use of a broken seven to denote a temporary persecution is a common symbol in the Bible.

But why did God use 1150 for a broken seven? That is a very good question.

In Revelation 12:6, we see 1260 days used to denote a broken seven - 1260 days is three and a half lunar years (with 360 days in a lunar year). But in Revelation 11:2, we see yet another symbol used for a broken seven - 42 months, which is also three and a half years. In Daniel 7:25, we saw "a time and times and the dividing of time" used to denote a broken seven.

So all we can say is that various symbols are used in the Bible for a broken seven, and we can't say for sure why 1150 was used here rather than 1260. Perhaps God wanted to assure Daniel that the terrible persecution would not just be temporary, but would **really** be temporary, and so God used a symbol slightly shorter than three and a half years.

Perhaps it is important that 1150 days is three years + 70 days if we use a 360 day lunar year because we have certainly seen the number 70 used elsewhere in the Bible.

But perhaps our struggle to make 1150 fit the usual symbolic scheme suggests that we should interpret the number literally, in which case it most likely denotes the time between the first offering of swine to Zeus in the temple until the cleansing of the temple.

We can't say for sure which of these three views is correct, but we can say that the interpretation of the 2300 days does not appear to be a critical feature in understanding the vision - why? Because Gabriel's interpretation in the second half of this chapter says nothing about it, and Daniel does not ask him about it.

Why didn't Daniel ask about it?

If Daniel took the number literally, then he was likely very relieved to hear that the trampling would last only 2300 days, or perhaps only 1150 days - there was no need to inquire further. If Daniel understood it figuratively, then he would have experienced the same relief - the persecution would be temporary. And I like what one commentary says about the use of days rather than years in verse 14: "The fact that it is expressed in days reminds the troubled Israelites that the Lord will not let this period extend a day beyond what they can bear."

Remember that the question in verse 13 (how long?) is also found in Revelation. How long? In Revelation the answer is soon (1:1, 1:3, 22:6, 22:10). The answer here is the same. God's people are being persecuted, but their affliction is temporary - unlike the affliction of their persecutors, which will be eternal.

We may be tempted today to ask, "how long?" How long until we are no longer trampled underfoot by societies and governments that reject God and that have thrown his word behind their backs? How long? The answer today is the same answer that Daniel heard when that same question was asked - our current situation is temporary. The permanent is yet to come. Whatever we are facing here on earth, it can be measured in days.

2 Corinthians 4:18 - While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Daniel 8:15-17

15 And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. 17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.

These events happen after the vision. Some commentators think that Daniel is now having a second vision, and this is possible, but I think Daniel is most likely literally in Susa and literally near the Ulai river for the reasons we talked about earlier.

In verse 15, Daniel sees someone who looks like a man, and in verse 16 Daniel hears a man's voice. The voice is directed to the one who looks like a man, and it says, "Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision."

Who is Gabriel? Daniel may have wondered about that, but not us. We know Gabriel from Luke 1.

Luke 1:19 - And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

Daniel is seeing the angel Gabriel in these verses.

And whose voice is it asking Gabriel to explain the vision to Daniel? We aren't told, but it could be God or another angel from God.

Daniel is the only book in the Old Testament that gives us the name of an angel. The only other angel who is named in the Bible is Michael, and we will meet him in Chapter 10 of Daniel.

The War Scroll from the Dead Sea scrolls lists four angels by name: Michael, Gabriel, Sariel, and Raphael. The book of First Enoch expands the list to seven by adding Uriel, Reuel, and Remiel. But we

only know two of those names from the inspired text.

#daniel