SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

Daniel

Chapter Eight

The Ram, the Goat & the Little Horn

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | THREE VOICES

Two empires named by an angel, one little horn that grows up to heaven, and a clock that runs out on the day God set — read through three teachers — **Amir Tsarfati**, **John MacArthur**, and **David Guzik** — with the Hebrew behind the vision.

THE PASSAGE

Daniel 8:1–27

Vision · interpretation · aftermath

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Daniel 8 — proud powers on God's schedule, and the hand that breaks them

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"He will even oppose the Prince of princes, But he will be broken without human agency." — Daniel 8:25

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Daniel 8:1–27

Proud Powers on God's Schedule, and the Hand That Breaks Them

† How to Read This Study

This study walks the chapter in four movements — the vision (vv. 1–8), the little horn and the clock (vv. 9–14), Gabriel's interpretation (vv. 15–22), and the insolent king with Daniel's aftermath (vv. 23–27) — then sets the passage inside the whole Bible. At each movement you will hear the same three teachers, each marked in his own color, and you will see the Hebrew Daniel wrote and why it matters. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add his angle. Where they overlap, the truth is underlined; where they differ, the passage opens wider.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel | JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You | DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 8:25

And through his shrewdness He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence;
And he will ⚠ magnify himself in his heart, And he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the △ Prince of princes, But ☆ he will be broken without human agency.

† Before the Passage

Chapter 8 opens in the third year of Belshazzar, about 551 BC — two years after the four beasts of chapter 7 and roughly a dozen years before Babylon falls to Cyrus. Babylon still looks secure. The vision does not bother with Babylon at all. It starts with the empire that will replace it and runs forward through the one after that, down to a single king who will attack the sanctuary and the people of God.

Two things shift at verse 1. The language turns back to *Hebrew* (2:4b–7:28 was Aramaic, the trade language of the Gentile world), and the subject turns with it: from here to the end of the book Daniel is writing about Israel, her sanctuary, her persecutor, and her deliverance. And Daniel is carried in the vision to Susa in Elam, a provincial town under Babylon that would become a royal capital of Persia — the city of Esther and of Nehemiah's cupbearing. God stands His prophet where the next empire will sit.

Hold one word over the whole chapter: **magnified**. The ram magnifies himself (v. 4), the goat magnifies himself *exceedingly* (v. 8), the little horn magnifies itself up to the Commander of the host (v. 11) and in his

heart against the Prince of princes (v. 25). Each pride climbs higher than the last, and each one breaks. The chapter is a staircase of arrogance with the same landing at the top: *broken* — and the last one broken "without human agency." Tsarfati reads the chapter forward to the Antichrist, MacArthur anchors it in Antiochus and the sovereignty that scheduled him, Guzik walks the history line by line. All three agree on the sermon: history runs on God's clock.

I
MOVEMENT

DANIEL 8:1–8

The Ram and the Goat

Two beasts, two empires — and a horn broken at the top

> *"[1] In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king a vision appeared to me, Daniel, subsequent to the one which appeared to me previously. [2] I looked in the vision, and while I was looking I was in the citadel of Susa, which is in the province of Elam; and I looked in the vision and I myself was beside the Ulai Canal. [3] Then I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the canal. Now the two horns were long, but one was longer than the other, with the longer one coming up last. [4] I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no other beasts could stand before him nor was there anyone to rescue from his power, but he did as he pleased and magnified himself."*
>
> DANIEL 8:1–4

חָזוֹן

CHAZON · "VISION"

Chazon is the prophet's word for a revelation seen, not merely heard (Isaiah 1:1; Obadiah 1). Daniel uses it eleven times in this chapter alone. Verse 1 ties it to "the one which appeared to me previously" — chapter 7. God is building on what He has already shown; prophecy in Daniel is cumulative, each vision sharpening the last.

הִגְדִּיל

HIGDIL · "MAGNIFIED HIMSELF"

From *gadal*, "to be great." In the causative stem it means to make oneself great. It is the drumbeat of the chapter: the ram (v. 4), the goat (v. 8), the horn (vv. 11, 25). Used of God it is worship (Psalm 34:3, "magnify the LORD with me"); used of a man it is the sin that precedes a fall.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

The ram "butting westward, northward, and southward" is Persia on the move, and the detail that the higher horn came up last is history written in advance: Media was the older kingdom, but Persia under Cyrus overtook it and ran the empire. Daniel is seeing this a decade before Babylon falls. When the Bible names empires before they rise, it is making a claim about who holds the calendar — and that same God still holds Israel's calendar today.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Notice how the ram is described: "no other beasts could stand before him nor was there anyone to rescue from his power." That is the language of unchecked dominion — and the next verse ends it. The sovereignty of God over nations is not an abstraction here; it is the plot. The ram does "as he pleased" exactly as long as God pleases, and not an hour longer. Daniel 2:21 is the thesis statement of the whole book: He removes kings and establishes kings.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that the ram was a recognized emblem of Persia — the Persian king is said to have worn a ram's head of gold when he marched at the head of his army, and rams' heads appear on Persian coins and pillars. The three directions match the record: west into Babylon and Asia Minor, north toward Armenia and the Caspian, south into Egypt. Daniel did not know the name of the empire yet; God gave him the shape first and the name later (v. 20).

"5 While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. 6 He came up to the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at him in his mighty wrath. 7 I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him; and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him, and there was none to rescue the ram from his power. 8 Then the male goat magnified himself exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven."

DANIEL 8:5–8

צְפִיר־הָעִזִּים

TSEPHIR HA-IZZIM · "MALE GOAT"

Literally "a he-goat of the goats" — a buck, the leader of the herd. He comes "from the west" (Greece lies west of Persia) and "without touching the ground": speed. The "conspicuous horn" (*qeren chazut*, "a horn of sight," one you cannot miss) is a single king in whom the whole kingdom is concentrated.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Four horns "toward the four winds of heaven" — the empire is not handed to a son, it is scattered to the compass points. Alexander had conquered the world by thirty-two and had no heir ready to hold it. Tsarfati's point is that God did not just foresee the breakup, He designed it so that one of those four pieces, Syria, would produce the man who foreshadows the final enemy of Israel. The map of the Middle East is drawn in heaven first.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

"As soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken." The timing is the sermon. The horn does not break in weakness but at the summit — when a man has the most reason to think himself secure. MacArthur presses the pattern of Psalm 2: nations rage, the Lord laughs, and the one who sits in the heavens never lost control of the moment. The goat's greatness is real and it is borrowed, and the lender collects on His own schedule.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik walks the history: Alexander crossed into Asia in 334 BC, broke Persia at the Granicus, Issus, and Gaugamela, and by 331 the "two horns" were shattered. He died at Babylon in June 323 BC, about thirty-two years old, at the height of his power — "as soon as he was mighty." The four horns are the kingdoms his generals carved out: Cassander (Macedonia and Greece), Lysimachus (Thrace and Asia Minor), Seleucus (Syria and the east), Ptolemy (Egypt). Guzik adds that the goat's one lasting gift was the common Greek that would carry the New Testament.

II
MOVEMENT

DANIEL 8:9–14

The Little Horn and the Clock

A horn that reaches heaven, and the number that limits it

"9 Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land. 10 It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. 11 It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. 12 And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper."

DANIEL 8:9–12

קֶרֶן־אַחַת מִצְּעִירָה

QEREN ACHAT MITSSE'IRAH · "A RATHER SMALL HORN"

Literally "one horn out of littleness." It begins small and "grew exceedingly great" — the same verb-family as *magnified*. Different Hebrew from the "little horn" of 7:8 (which is Aramaic, *ze'eirah*), which is one reason careful readers keep the two horns distinct while hearing them rhyme.

הַצְּבִי

HA-TSEVI · "THE BEAUTIFUL LAND"

Tsevi means beauty, glory, splendor; here it is a name for Israel (Daniel 11:16, 41; compare Ezekiel 20:6, "the glory of all lands"). Of every direction the horn could push, the text singles out the land God calls beautiful — because the fight in this chapter is finally about Him, not geography.

הַתָּמִיד

HA-TAMID · "THE REGULAR SACRIFICE"

Just "the continual" — the word *sacrifice* is supplied. The morning and evening burnt offering (Exodus 29:38–42) was Israel's daily heartbeat of worship. To remove the *tamid* is to stop the nation's pulse. That is what the horn attacks first.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

The horn grows toward the south, the east, and the Beautiful Land — Egypt, Persia, and Israel — which is precisely Antiochus's career. But look where it ends: "up to the host of heaven," "equal with the Commander of the host." A Syrian king does not stop at Jerusalem; he reaches for God's throne. Tsarfati sees the pattern of Isaiah 14 ("I will make myself like the Most High") and the future man of 2 Thessalonians 2 who sits in the temple displaying himself as God. Antiochus is the rehearsal; the performance is still ahead.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Verse 12 has the hardest clause in the chapter: "on account of transgression the host will be given over." The horn prospers because God hands over — and He hands over because of Israel's sin, the Hellenizing priests who sold the temple to buy favor. MacArthur will not let the reader make this a story only about a wicked Gentile. Judgment begins at the household of God (1 Peter 4:17). Truth flung to the ground "prospered"; that is not a defeat of God, it is a discipline from Him, with a date on it.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik lists the fulfillment in Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BC): he took the Seleucid throne by intrigue, pushed into Egypt, stripped and slaughtered Jerusalem, stopped the daily offering, and in December 167 BC set up an altar to Zeus in the temple and offered a pig on it (1 Maccabees 1). He called himself *Theos Epiphanes*, "God manifest," on his coins; his subjects called him *Epimanes*, "the madman." "Some of the stars" fell — Guzik takes that as the slaughter of the faithful in Israel; the whole sentence is a man swinging at heaven and hitting God's people.

"13 Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, "How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?" 14 He said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored.""

DANIEL 8:13–14

עֶרֶב בֹּקֶר

EREV BOQER · "EVENINGS AND MORNINGS"

The vision is measured in the units of the thing that was stolen: the evening and morning offering. Two readings have long been held. 2,300 *days* (about 6 years 4 months, c. 171/170 to 164 BC, from the first assault on the priesthood to the cleansing), or 2,300 *offerings* — 1,150 days (about 3 years 2 months, December 167 to December 164 BC, the time the altar actually stood defiled). Either way the number ends on a known day.

וְנִצְדַּק

VE-NITSDAQ · “WILL BE PROPERLY RESTORED”

From *tsadaq*, “to be right, be justified” — the holy place will be *put right*, vindicated. Not merely cleaned but declared righteous again. Judas Maccabeus rededicated the altar on 25 Kislev, 164 BC; Israel still keeps that day as Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication Jesus attended in John 10:22.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

“How long?” is the question of every persecuted believer and of Israel in every generation. Heaven answers with a number. That is the comfort of prophecy: evil has an expiration date fixed before it began. And the restored holy place after a measured trampling is the pattern of the last days too — a sanctuary, an abomination, a limited time (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5), and then the Lord Himself sets it right. Tsarfati keeps the near and the far together: Hanukkah is a down payment.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

The holy ones are not asking because they are anxious; they are asking so that Daniel — and we — can overhear the answer. God’s discipline of His people is severe and it is *bounded*. MacArthur’s emphasis falls on the precision: not “a while,” but 2,300. The God who counts the sacrifices He is temporarily withholding is the God who counts the hairs of your head. Suffering under His hand is never open-ended.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik lays out both readings of the 2,300 and leans to the count of days, but notes that the exact arithmetic matters less than the fact that it ended: on the very date the desecration began three years earlier, the altar was cleansed. He adds a pastoral note from the text — “then the holy place will be properly restored” is the first promise in the chapter after twelve verses of trampling. God lets the question hang just long enough, and then He answers it with a date.

III
MOVEMENT

DANIEL 8:15–22

Gabriel Names the Empires

An angel, a frightened prophet, and prophecy with proper nouns

> *"15 When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man. 16 And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulai, and he called out and said, "△ Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision." 17 So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end." 18 Now while he was talking with me, I sank into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and made me stand upright. 19 He said, "Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end."*
>
> DANIEL 8:15–19

גַּבְרִיאֵל

GAVRI'EL · "GABRIEL"

"Man of God" or "God is my strong man" (*gever*, a mighty man + *El*). The first angel named in Scripture, and named only four times: here, in 9:21, and in Luke 1:19 and 1:26 — where the same messenger announces John and then Jesus. The one who explains the time of the end is the one who announces the Child who ends it.

עֵת־קֵץ

ET-QETS · "TIME OF THE END"

Qets is an end, a cutting off. Gabriel says twice that the vision "pertains to the time of the end" (v. 17) and "the appointed time of the end" (v. 19). In Daniel the phrase can mean the end of the matter in view (Antiochus's indignation) and the end of the age (11:40; 12:4, 9). The ambiguity is not sloppiness; it is how prophecy stacks a near fulfillment under a far one.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

"The final period of the indignation" — *za'am*, God's wrath on His own people for their sin — is a phrase Daniel will hear again (11:36) about a king who is clearly beyond Antiochus. Tsarfati reads Gabriel's "time of the end" as the hinge: the angel is telling Daniel that what Antiochus does to the temple is a scale model of what the final enemy will do in the Tribulation, and that both are *appointed*. God schedules the wrath and the relief.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Daniel — the man who read the handwriting on the wall and slept among lions — falls on his face and then into a stupor. MacArthur draws the line from Isaiah's "woe is me" to John on Patmos: true exposure to heaven does not make a man feel strong; it flattens him. And the angel "touched me and made me stand upright." Revelation comes with a hand under the arm. God does not crush His servants with truth; He steadies them to carry it.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik observes that "Son of man" here is just *ben adam*, a mortal — Ezekiel's title — and that Daniel is addressed as a mortal precisely when heaven is about to hand him the heaviest material. He also points out that God sends an interpreter at all: the vision was given to be *understood*, not to be admired as mystery. "Give this man an understanding" is the whole purpose of prophecy stated in one command.

"20 "The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia.
21 "The shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king. 22 "The broken horn and the four horns that arose in its place represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation, although not with his power."

DANIEL 8:20–22

מַלְכֵי מָדַי וּפָרָס

MALKHEI MADAI U-PHARAS · "KINGS OF MEDIA AND PERSIA"

Daniel 8 is the chapter that supplies the names. The second kingdom of the statue (chapter 2) and the bear raised on one side (7:5) are here spelled out: Media and Persia, one empire with two horns. Then *Yavan*, Greece, for the goat. Everything later in Daniel 10–11 hangs on these two verses, and so does our reading of the fourth kingdom that follows them.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Here is the part skeptics cannot bear: Daniel names Greece two centuries before Greece matters, and names it as the conqueror of Persia while Babylon still stands. That is why liberal scholarship wants a second-century author — not because of the manuscripts, but because of the prophecy. For Tsarfati the stakes are simple: if God could name Alexander in advance, He can keep every promise He made to Israel about the end.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

"Although not with his power." The four kingdoms never match the one they came from; division is weakness, and God built the weakness into the plan. MacArthur hears the doctrine of providence in a subordinate clause: the greatest conqueror in history leaves a fractured estate, exactly as foretold, so that no man could ever say the empire was his. The glory of nations is on loan.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik is matter-of-fact: the ram, the goat, the first king, the four kingdoms — the text interprets itself, and secular history confirms every line. He takes this as the controlling example for how to read Daniel's other symbols: when God gives the key, use it. The chapters that do not name their empires (2 and 7) should be read in the light of the one that does.

IV
MOVEMENT

DANIEL 8:23–27

The Insolent King

Mighty by borrowed power, broken by no hand — and a prophet who went back to work

"23 "In the latter period of their rule, When the transgressors have run their course, A king will arise, Insolent and skilled in intrigue. 24 "His power will be mighty, but not by his own power, And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree And prosper and perform his will; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people. 25 "And through his shrewdness He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; And he will magnify himself in his heart, And he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, But he will be broken without human agency."

DANIEL 8:23–25

עַז־פָּנִים

AZ-PANIM · "INSOLENT"

Literally "fierce of face," hard-faced — Deuteronomy 28:50 uses it of the brutal nation God would send against a disobedient Israel. "Skilled in intrigue" is *mevin chidot*, "understanding riddles," a master of double meanings. The king is a bully and a manipulator at once: force in the face, deceit in the mouth.

בְּאֶפֶס יָד

BE-EFES YAD · "WITHOUT HUMAN AGENCY"

Literally "with no hand" — the same idea as the stone "cut out without hands" that smashes the statue (2:34, 45). No army and no assassin end this king. Antiochus died in Persia in 164 BC of a sudden disease, far from any battlefield in Judea. God removed him personally.

שַׂר־שָׂרִים

SAR-SARIM · "PRINCE OF PRINCES"

Sar is a commander, a prince — the "Commander of the host" in verse 11, and Michael is "one of the chief princes" in 10:13. But "Prince of princes" is a superlative like "King of kings": this is the Lord Himself. The horn's war with Israel was always a war with Israel's God.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Read verse 25 twice. “Deceit,” “magnify himself,” “destroy many while they are at ease,” “oppose the Prince of princes” — every line fits Antiochus and every line overflows him into the man of Daniel 7:8 and 25, 11:36, 2 Thessalonians 2, and Revelation 13. Tsarfati’s rule: the near fulfillment proves the far one. Antiochus is God’s sketch of the Antichrist, and the last clause is God’s sketch of the end: “broken without human agency” — by the breath of the Lord’s mouth, not a coalition.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

“His power will be mighty, but not by his own power.” MacArthur will not let that stand as a footnote. Every tyrant in Scripture is on God’s leash — Pharaoh raised up to display His power (Romans 9:17), Nebuchadnezzar called “My servant,” Antiochus mighty by permission. The believer’s comfort is not that evil is weak; it is that evil is *borrowed*, measured, and already judged. And God is pleased to end it in a way that leaves no human hero to credit.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik ticks the fulfillments: Antiochus seized the throne from the rightful heir by intrigue; he was strong because Rome and the dying Seleucid machine let him be; he destroyed “many while they are at ease” — 1 Maccabees records a Sabbath-day massacre in Jerusalem when the city thought itself safe; and he died of illness on campaign in Persia, 164 BC. He adds the sober note that this man was *allowed*, “when the transgressors have run their course”: Israel’s compromise opened the gate before Antiochus walked through it.

“26 “The vision of the evenings and mornings Which has been told is true; But keep the vision secret, For it pertains to many days in the future.” 27 Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I got up again and carried on the king’s business; but I was astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain it.”

DANIEL 8:26–27

נִהְיֵיתִי

NIHYEITI · “I WAS EXHAUSTED”

From *hayah*, “to be” — in this stem, “I was done, finished, undone.” The prophet was wrecked by what he saw, and then the next sentence begins “Then I got up again.” The Hebrew sets undone and arose side by side. Obedience does not wait for understanding: “there was none to explain it,” and Daniel went back to the king’s business anyway.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

“Keep the vision secret, for it pertains to many days in the future.” Gabriel says plainly that the whole meaning will not be available in Daniel’s lifetime. Tsarfati hears the same instruction in 12:4 — seal the book until the time of the end — and takes it as permission: a generation that has watched Israel return to the Beautiful Land is meant to read this chapter with more light than Daniel had, not less.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Verse 27 is the most practical verse in the chapter. The man of God is sick for days, does not understand the vision, has no one to explain it — and gets up and does the work God put in front of him. MacArthur's application: prophecy is not given to make you a spectator of the future but a servant in the present. Sanctification is not the ability to chart the end; it is faithfulness in the king's business while the chart is still sealed.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that Daniel's reaction is the same as every honest reader's: astonishment, and a lack of explanation. He takes comfort from "the vision … is true" — the reliability of the word is not conditioned on our grasp of it. And he underlines that Daniel, a high official in a pagan court, did not resign to go study prophecy. He went back to his desk. That is where most of us are called to watch the times from.

V
MOVEMENT

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

The little horn in both Testaments, and the God who schedules it

"After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it."

DANIEL 7:6

"Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation."

DANIEL 11:31

"Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),"

MATTHEW 24:15

"Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God."

2 THESSALONIANS 2:3-4

> *"There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him."*
>
> REVELATION 13:5

> *"Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';"*
>
> ISAIAH 46:9–10

> *"It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding."*
>
> DANIEL 2:21

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Matthew 24:15 settles the question of whether Daniel's little horn is finished history. Two hundred years after Antiochus, Jesus tells His disciples the abomination of desolation is still ahead — "when *you* see." Paul then describes a man who sits in God's temple displaying himself as God, and John gives him forty-two months. The leopard of chapter 7, the goat of chapter 8, the vile person of chapter 11, the beast of Revelation 13: one storyline, one enemy, one Prince of princes who ends it.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Isaiah 46 and Daniel 2:21 are the theology under the vision. God does not forecast history as an observer; He declares the end from the beginning because He is accomplishing it. MacArthur ties Daniel 8 to Daniel 11:31 — the detailed prophecy of Antiochus — and then to the Lord's use of it in Matthew 24 as proof that Scripture interprets Scripture: the Son of God read Daniel as a prophet, with a near fulfillment behind and a final one ahead.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reads the chain simply: the four-headed leopard (7:6) is the goat with four horns (8:8), the little horn of chapter 8 is the man of 11:21–35 in detail, and 11:36 onward and the New Testament carry the figure past Antiochus to the last days. He adds Psalm 2:4 to the list: while the kings of the earth magnify themselves, "He who sits in the heavens laughs." The whole of Daniel 8 is that laugh, written out with dates.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Three voices, one chapter

The same chapter, read three ways. Tsarfati listens for Israel and the end of the age; MacArthur presses the sovereignty of God and the present-tense obedience it calls for; Guzik walks the history and the text. Together they keep Daniel 8 from becoming either a dead almanac or a newspaper.

THE MOMENT	TSARFATI · the times	MACARTHUR · sovereignty	GUZIK · text & history
Ram & goat (8:1–8)	Empires named before they rise; God holds Israel's calendar.	"Did as he pleased" — exactly as long as God pleased.	Persia's ram emblem; Alexander dead at 32; four generals.
Little horn (8:9–12)	Antiochus rehearses the Antichrist of 2 Thess 2.	"On account of transgression" — judgment begins at home.	Zeus altar, swine on the altar, December 167 BC.
The clock (8:13–14)	Evil has an expiration date; Hanukkah is a down payment.	Discipline is severe and bounded; God counts.	2,300 days or offerings — either way it ended on a date.
Gabriel (8:15–22)	"Time of the end" stacks near under far.	Heaven flattens the prophet, then stands him up.	The text interprets itself; use the key God gives.
Insolent king (8:23–27)	Near fulfillment proves the far one.	Power borrowed; prophecy makes servants, not spectators.	Died of illness in Persia; Daniel went back to his desk.
The whole Bible	Jesus says the abomination is still ahead (Matt 24:15).	Isaiah 46: God declares the end because He accomplishes it.	Leopard = goat = vile person = beast; Psalm 2:4.

DANIEL 8 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **The chapter names its own empires.** Media-Persia and Greece (vv. 20–21) are the only kingdoms Daniel identifies outright; they anchor every other vision in the book. Alexander is foretold two centuries early. TEXT
- ***Magnified* is the spine of the chapter.** Ram (v. 4), goat (v. 8), horn (vv. 11, 25) — each pride higher, each one broken. Pride in Daniel is never a mood; it is a schedule. GUZIK
- **The horn prospers because God hands over.** "On account of transgression" (v. 12). Israel's own Hellenizing priests opened the gate; Antiochus walked through it. Discipline, with a date. MACARTHUR
- **2,300 evenings and mornings ended on a day you can look up.** 25 Kislev, 164 BC — the altar cleansed, the origin of Hanukkah, the feast Jesus attended in John 10:22. TEXT

- **Antiochus is the sketch; the Antichrist is the portrait.** Jesus (Matt 24:15), Paul (2 Thess 2), and John (Rev 13) all treat the abomination as still future. Near fulfillment proves far. TSARFATI
- **"Not by his own power … broken without human agency."** The king is mighty by permission and removed by God alone (vv. 24–25) — the stone cut without hands (2:34) in miniature. MACARTHUR
- **Hebrew resumes at 8:1.** The Aramaic chapters (2:4b–7:28) were about the Gentile world; from here the subject is Israel, her sanctuary, and her deliverance. TEXT
- **Daniel got up and went to work.** Sick, astounded, unexplained — and faithful at the king's business (v. 27). Prophecy makes servants, not spectators. GUZIK

† Questions for the Table

1 **Three times a power "magnified himself" and three times it broke. Where are you making yourself big right now — in ministry, in opinion, in reputation — and what would it look like to be small and kept instead?**

Pride always escalates and it always breaks; I would rather be small in God's hand than great and broken.

DANIEL 8:4, 8, 11, 25

2 **"On account of transgression the host will be given over." Antiochus got in through the compromise of Israel's own leaders. Where does the danger to God's people start inside the camp before it shows up at the gate?**

The gate is usually opened from inside; guard your own integrity first.

DANIEL 8:12

3 **The trampling had a number on it — 2,300 — and ended on a date. What are you walking through that feels open-ended, and how does a God who counts the offerings He withholds change the way you wait?**

Whatever God permits He also measures; it will not go one day past His appointed time.

DANIEL 8:13–14

4 **Daniel fell, slept, was touched and made to stand. When has God's truth flattened you, and how did He steady you afterward?**

Revelation comes with a hand under the arm; God steadies the servant He has leveled.

DANIEL 8:17–18

5 **"He will cause deceit to succeed … truth to the ground, and it prospered." What lie is winning around you for a season, and how do you keep from measuring truth by what seems to be working?**

Lies can prosper for a time; I keep picking truth up off the ground anyway.

DANIEL 8:12, 25

6 **Daniel did not understand the vision and went back to the king's business. What is the next right thing in front of you that does not require you to have the end figured out?**

Faithfulness today does not wait on understanding tomorrow; show up and keep your post.

DANIEL 8:27

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The ram magnified himself, the goat magnified himself exceedingly, the horn magnified itself up to heaven — and the Prince of princes broke the last one without a hand. History runs on God's clock; the king's business is still ours today.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

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