



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

God is Sovereign in What Seems Chaos (Daniel 8)

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Many see only the chaos of life around them. Sickness, violence, divorce, hostility. We see the economic challenges of lost jobs and failed careers. Perhaps your personal life is relatively stable, but you see the international chaos of wars, terrorism, trade disruptions, as well as empires rising and falling. This may look to some as if our history was, our present times are, and our future is unpredictable. Daniel asked God about that. Can you share how God provided for you during an uncertain time?

INTRODUCTION

God gave a vision of the future in a dream to the king of Babylon shortly after 600 B.C. King Nebuchadnezzar had Daniel interpret the meaning of the giant statue representing kingdoms throughout future years. (Daniel 2:31-45). Daniel had a dream and visions while serving King Nebuchadnezzar in 553 B.C. He wrote the details as his dream in Chapter seven. This featured four beasts, representing the kingdoms continuing to the end of time. Daniel's dream of 551 B.C. is reported in his Chapter eight. Revealed were God's details on successive kingdoms and leaders, moving through their next 400 years. God also gave Daniel another glimpse of the end times of our world. **How did Daniel use the understanding given to him?**

DANIEL'S VISION OF THE RAM

Daniel 8:2-4 I looked up and saw a ram standing beside the river. It had two horns. Both horns were long, but one was longer than the other, and the longer one came up second. I saw the ram charging westward and northward, and southward. All beasts were powerless to withstand it, and no one could rescue from its power; it did as it pleased and became strong. (NRSV)

Daniel was serving in Babylon and lived to watch this part of God's vision unfold. A Ram represented the Medo-Persian Empire. A longer horn depicted Persia, conquering under Cyrus. Daniel apparently shared God's vision with Cyrus about fourteen years later, along with a prophecy naming Cyrus (Isaiah 45:1). **Can you share some impact Daniel had on Cyrus and on the people in the world around them?**

DANIEL'S VISION OF THE GOAT

Daniel 8:5 As I was watching, a male goat appeared from the west, coming across the face of the whole earth without touching the ground. The goat had a horn between its eyes. (NRSV)

Daniel's vision next represented the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great. He died at the age of thirty-three, after conquering the world with his army of 35,000. Daniel vividly predicted this conquest, though he did not live to see it. Four of Alexander's generals divided up the Greek Empire in 323 B.C. **How have you remained faithful during leadership transitions?**

DANIEL'S VISION OF THE LITTLE HORN

Daniel 8:9-10 Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. (NIV)

A successor of one of the Greek generals, Antiochus Epiphanes, rose to rule the Syrian division (175-164). He ravaged Jerusalem. Antiochus fiercely persecuted God's people, the starry hosts, and desecrated their temple. He died due to insanity and disease of the bowels. **What signs have you seen that such violent persecution may become widespread?**

THE APPOINTED TIME OF THE END

Daniel 8:15-16 I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, and suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." (NKJV).

Angels were present and one was named. The time of intense persecution under Antiochus was exactly as predicted. It is a mirror of the coming reign of another "little horn," the antichrist at the end of time. **Do these revelations add confidence as you reflect?**

A PRAYER

Almighty God, thank You for revealing Your sovereignty in the affairs of the world. Help me to be at peace with issues in my life and those in the world. This I pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.