

The Little, Little Horn (Part 1)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 March 2016

Preacher: Don Coleman

[0 : 00] Daniel chapter 8 tonight. We're not going to be able to get through all of it tonight.

! Regret that, but there's just a lot here. Now, I've entitled this the little, little horn. And regrettably, we're not going to get to that portion of the passage where that title makes sense about this little horn, this little, little horn.

And so, I think I'll just begin by telling you that the little horn in this chapter, which is, of course, the record of a vision of Daniel, is not the same as the little horn in chapter 7. The little horn in chapter 7 is the Antichrist.

In chapter 8, the little horn is someone else. Someone that actually, for us, is past, gone, dead. And we'll get to his name. Well, I'll go ahead and tell you. It's Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

All right? I'm sure that you've heard of him. And you might have. A pretty famous ruler in history. It's not just pertaining to Israel, but the world itself. So, anyway, and the words that are used here, little horn, are actually, by definition, different than the words in chapter 7. Actually, it refers to a less than little horn. So, that's why I call it the little, little horn. And it doesn't, I don't mean to diminish this particular ruler's power. He had great power. And certainly not diminishing his importance, significance. What he did in the way of persecution of God's people was great, was terrible. And so forth. We'll get to all of that later. But when I say little, little horn, and when Daniel uses a term that means the less than little horn, he's making a distinction between that particular little horn that will one day come, who will be the Antichrist. And in reference to or in comparison to significance, that little horn will rise way above the little horn we're going to be reading about in this prophecy. All right, now you're all confused. But I just wanted to mention that. And then next time we'll get, really get into that part of it. All right, so I debated whether I would read the entire chapter first and decided not to. And we'll just be kind of reading it, or I'm going to be reading it. You'll be following along in your notes as we move through this, my outline for this chapter. Now, to begin with, we want to consider just a few kind of introductory points of interest or points of reference, some important information before we really move into the chapter. This chapter, chapter 8, contains the details and interpretation. So we have the detail, just like in the last chapter, we have the details of the vision and also the interpretation. But it's of a second vision.

[3 : 35] This is a second vision seen by the prophet Daniel. This is a second vision. Like the first vision, which was chapter 7, we spent several weeks looking at chapter 7. Like the first vision, this one, this vision also contains animals that symbolize world empires. All right, in fact, though they are different animals, they are going to signify to the same empire, two of those, two of the four that we looked at or have were revealed in chapter 7. And specifically, the ram represented the Medo-Persian empire. Medo-Persian empire, and we know that from verse 20, when the angel Gabriel gives the interpretation, and the goat represented the Greek empire, all right? We could guess that because those two came in succession. Medo, then Greek, and then, of course, the Roman empire, which does not appear in this chapter, and there's a reason for that, and we'll get to that. All right.

So, animals to symbolize empire, same kind of deal that we saw in the last chapter, though different animals. Also, like the first vision that we have in chapter 7, this one also contains horns. Horns that almost always in scripture symbolize powerful world leaders. The word horn in scripture either signifies power in a generic sense or in a specific sense, a person of power or a king or an emperor or something like that. Now, specifically, in this particular vision, those two powers or two horns that we're going to read about, first one is Alexander the Great, the second one, Antiochus the fourth epiphanies, all right? Now, also, just by way of introduction, the language changes from Aramaic to Hebrew in chapter 8, and that's important. From Aramaic to Hebrew, and the question is why?

And really, I think this is interesting. Daniel wrote in Hebrew when his subject matter pertained primarily to his own people, the Hebrews. All right, so when the subject of either a vision or prophecy or whatever it is, or history, as in the first part of the book, when it pertains to God's people, then he wrote in Hebrew, all right? So chapter 1, verse 1, all the way to chapter 2, verse 4, and from chapters 8 through 12, they were all written in the language of his people, Hebrew, the Hebrew people. All right, so these portions of the book deal particularly with the Hebrew people. Therefore, Daniel used his native language when writing, so it's just as simple as that. But Daniel wrote in Aramaic when his subject matter pertained primarily to the Gentile world. Aramaic was the language of the Gentiles. Chapters 2, verse 4, all the way through the end of chapter 7 specifically, relate specifically to the Gentile world empires. Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, Romans. So the subject matter, you know, in those portions of the book pertain to Gentile empires.

[7 : 31] All right, so he wrote in Aramaic. And so Daniel then shifts back to Hebrew here in chapter 8 because God's chosen people need to be warned, need to be warned of a coming crisis that would directly touch them. All right, so this second vision is, I guess, more specifically targeted or related to God's people, the children of Israel. And so that's why he reverted back to Hebrew.

And we could think of it this way. I don't think I put this in your notes. You can jot this down if you want, but in the previous chapter, in chapter 7, we spent several weeks on it. The four kingdoms that would rise to power and the rise of the Antichrist, which is a part of that vision, and then subsequently the destruction and the judgment of Antichrist and his kingdom, and ultimately the coming of Christ and the establishment of his eternal kingdom.

all of that, yes, would include, certainly the Hebrews would be a part of that. But in the present chapter, in chapter 8, the prophecy warns of a coming power that will bring intense persecution, particularly, specifically, to God's people, the Hebrews. The persecution actually would be the persecutions of a madman named Antiochus the Fourth Epiphanies.

All right? Therefore, we should note, then, that the prophetic views in chapters 7 and 8 are different. They're different, even though the visions in some ways parallel one another because they pertain to kingdoms of the world that are the same in both visions, even though not all four, all four kingdoms aren't mentioned here in the second vision, two of the four are.

Even though there is similarity there, the prophetic, we need to understand that the prophetic view of chapter 7 is a wide view from start to finish, all the way through, because the view is of the entire world. It's a, it's the entire world is in view here in chapter 7. In that, in that vision, all right? But the prophetic view of chapter 8 is ultimately very narrow.

[10 : 13] It's very narrow. Now, it may begin with a fairly wide view, you know, the conflict between two world powers, Persia and Greece. It's going to begin there, but then the view will narrow until the focus is on, really on the tiny and comparatively insignificant land of Judah. That's where this vision is going to end.

It's going to end just in that one area of the world, not the grand stage of the world with these, you know, these great empires and then ultimately, you know, the coming of Christ and the millennial kingdom. Not in that wide view, but in a very narrow view, Judah and the persecution of God's people Israel there. That's the point of this vision. And it's to warn the people. And with that in mind, one other thing that I might, that I would mention before we look at the text, Daniel's prophecy concerning this coming persecutor, Antiochus the fourth epiphanies, his prophecy concerning this coming persecutor of his people will not be fulfilled for nearly 400 years.

from when Daniel had the vision, it's going to be 400 years later. You know, if you want to warn a people, you know, you really want to do that way out in advance, don't you? 400 years before it happens. I'm going to warn you. Now, none of you people who are reading this right now are going to be alive then, but just know that God's people are going to endure tremendous persecution at the hand of a madman. But it's not going to happen for almost 400 years. And it's interesting. And I think also, it really highlights the inspired nature of scripture, because Daniel had a vision about something that was not going to happen for 400 years. And but then almost 400 years later, it exactly happened the way he said it would in the vision. Antiochus Epiphanes, he's going to rule over the land of Judah eventually, and to bring severe persecution to God's people. That's going to happen in 167 BC. And it will be the fulfillment when that happens, it will be the fulfillment of a 383 year old prophetic vision of Daniel recorded here in Daniel chapter eight, which occurred in 550 BC.

So, you know, 383 years later, it comes to pass. It happens exactly as the vision says. Let's go ahead to the first point of our outline, the setting, the setting of Daniel's second vision. All right, that's how the text begins. Give us a little word about the setting. And so, first of all, what does the text tell us about the wind, the wind of the vision?

[13:14] And these are just details that I think are important to know, but, you know, just historical details. The wind of the vision. Well, verse one says, in the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar, a vision appeared to me, to me, Daniel. It's almost like, and that's how it's written.

It's very emphatic. Yeah, to me, to me, Daniel. After the one that appeared to me the first time. All right, so when was this? Well, you need to go back in our thinking. We've kind of covered this ground before, as we studied, what we studied earlier in Daniel. Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus, his father. All right, well, it'd have to be his father if he was his son. And he was king of the Babylonian Empire, right? Nabonidus and Belshazzar is his son. In 553 BC, Belshazzar would become co-regent, co-regent of Babylon with his father. So there would be two rulers of the Babylonian Empire. Nabonidus and his son Belshazzar. All right, we kind of covered that ground earlier.

And so, you know, we can do the math. Daniel had his second vision in 550 BC, the third year of Belshazzar's reign as co-regent of the Babylonian Empire. By the way, it was this same year, historically, that Cyrus established the Medo-Persian Empire that had not yet conquered Babylon. That's going to happen, you know, a few years later. You have to remember the dates. They go down, you know, you go down as you approach the cross. But in 539, Cyrus and the Persians would conquer Babylon. So it was in that same year that Cyrus established power and reign over the Medo-Persian Empire. And then a few short years later, he would conquer Babylon. This second vision that we have here in chapter 8 occurred two years after the first vision. All right, so two years have transpired since chapter 7. Now, chapter 7, verse 1, in the first year, Belshazzar, king of Babylon. So in the first year,

Daniel had this first vision, the one we studied, about the four beasts. And then Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. And then finally, Daniel's first and second visions occurred before the events recorded in chapter 5. Now, what was recorded in chapter 5? That was when Belshazzar had this great feast, remember? And he brought in the, you know, the sacred vessels that had been confiscated, been stolen by Nebuchadnezzar when he conquered Jerusalem and sacked the temple. And he brought those in and made that part of his drunken kind of orgy, drunken feast. And he's blaspheming Yahweh God. And then God takes his finger and writes on the wall. All right, so we studied that in chapter 5. This vision of Daniel, both visions, occurred before that. And which has led some to speculate that Belshazzar perhaps heard of these prophetic visions about the end of his empire and the coming of the Medes and the Persians. He had heard about it, revealed, you know, that were revealed, which might explain his blasphemy and his drunken banquet. Kind of interesting to think about that possibility. All right, next, the where of the vision. The when, now the where, verse 2. I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan. Some versions have Susa, the citadel or fortress, which is in the province of Elam. And I saw in the vision that I was by the river

Uleai. Uleai. All right, now, we cannot really say with absolute certainty that Daniel was actually in these places. They saw in Shushan when he had the vision, or that he just merely saw himself there in the vision. And, you know, really, it doesn't matter. I really think it's the latter, that he saw himself in these places, this place in the vision. The phrase, I saw in the vision that I was in such place, that seems to suggest the latter of the two, that this is what he saw in the vision, that he was in this place. And we have some other examples. I think Ezekiel was another one that said something similar. He saw himself in another place.

[18:31] Also, what Daniel said in verse 27 would really be impossible if he was actually in Shushan when he had the vision. Verse 27 says, afterward, that is after the vision, then he says, I was sick.

And then he said, and I rose and went about the king's business. All right, so that would suggest that he was in Babylon when he had the vision. You know, Shushan was some 220 miles away from Babylon, so he couldn't have the, go to Shushan, have the vision, and then get up and go about the king's business, which would have been in Babylon, would be possible for that. The place in Daniel's vision was significant to prophecy. So I would say to you that whether he was actually there when he had the vision or whether he just saw himself there, it doesn't really matter because

it is this place that is significant prophetically. Shushan or Susa was a Persian city. It was not part of Babylon.

It was a Persian city in the capital of Elam, and it was the capital of Elam. And it would later become a royal city under the Medo-Persian Empire. After they came to power, it would be a royal city.

The city began, actually, they say, historians say, as a winter residence for the Persian kings. It would go there in the wintertime, somewhere near the Mediterranean. Later, under Darius I of the Medo-Persian Empire, it became the administrative capital of the empire. So what we're painting a picture of here is that this was a very key city of the Persian Empire, Medo-Persians. And interesting, both Nehemiah and Esther lived in Shushan. They both lived there. And today, Daniel may have been buried in Shushan. Today, this would be modern Iran. It's not near the Mediterranean. I misspoke there. This is in Iran. That was Persian. In fact, it reminds me that, I may have told you this, one of my trips to Houston a while back, Sherry and I, we found, I thought was, well, was an Italian restaurant. Just a small little Italian restaurant not far from the hospital. And I don't remember the name of it, but we loved their lasagna. And so one time we were there, one of the waiters there, and really I think was one of the part owners, because they all looked kind of like brothers, you know, kind of ran this place. And so we just, I just kind of asked, you know, where are you from? You know, you could tell his accent said, we're from, we're from Persia.

[21 : 38] And I thought, Persian? And then he explained that, well, today that's Iran. He didn't consider himself Iranian. He said, we're Persian. And historically, that's correct. Anyway. All right.

So here's the point. The place Daniel saw himself in, his vision, was appropriate to the prophetic meaning of the vision. That the Persian empire would conquer Babylon and replace it as a world power of the day. So the place he saw himself was significant for that. All right. So the setting of Daniel's second vision. Second, the substance of Daniel's second vision. This is the vision itself. Here's what Daniel saw in his vision. He saw several things. First, he saw the ram with two unequal horns. That's how I would name it. That's how it's described. A ram with two unequal horns.

Unequal, that is, in size.

Verse three says, then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there standing beside the river was a ram, which had two horns. And the two horns were high, but one was higher than the other. And the higher one came up last. All right. So that's kind of interesting vision. I don't know what this looked like. You know, I mean, we know what a ram looks like. And they always have two horns, you know, kind of curled under, you know, like that. Only this ram was a little bit different. It had two horns, but they weren't the same size. One was higher, but not at first. It became higher. It came up last. So interesting to see. Imagine what that might look like. Now I'm going to, you know, kind of go down through what he saw here and resist a little bit making the application interpretation. We'll wait till we get to the interpretation, but I'm going to have to make some connections here with the vision and, you know, historical facts, realities. All right. So first, all right, let's just pick this apart.

[23 : 51] Daniel saw a ram. And we've already learned that the animals in Daniel's vision always represent kingdoms, empires, right? I mean, we've already seen that. Go back to chapter seven, those creatures that he saw, those animals, and then that fourth one that really didn't fit with anything in the animal kingdom that we know about, but they represented kingdoms. And so the same is true here. We, you know, they can't represent something else now. They represent kingdoms. All right. So we know that.

And the ram represents some coming conquering empire. All right. We know that. And we can just, we can assume that. Second, Daniel saw a ram with two horns. And we know from, again, from past visions that a horn represents power in the form of kingship. So the horns represent kings. That was the case in chapter seven. That's the case here. All right. Don't even have to say it. We already know it.

So the two horns represent two kings. Right? They'd have to. Horn represents king. Two of them represents two kings. One of the horns, or kings, according to what Daniel saw, was higher or more powerful than the other, even though it came up last. That is, it became bigger last. All right. Saw two horns at the beginning, but one of them was bigger than the others, but it, that happened last, last in his vision of the ram.

Now we're going to discover that the two horns represent the two divisions of the powerful Medo-Persian empire. All right. So we're going to jump ahead and go ahead and make an interpreted connection here. Talking about the Medo, this ram is the Medo-Persian empire.

And, uh, it began with two kings coming together. All right. To form the media, the media empire and the Persian empire coming together to form one empire, Medo-Persian empire. Media was the, the, was a powerful nation first, more powerful even than the Persians.

[26 : 30] The Persian empire under Cyrus eventually became more powerful. And Cyrus was the first emperor or king of the Medo-Persian empire. He came to power and became even stronger. Uh, and so that, that's why there was an unequal, the horns were unequal in size.

Verse four, I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward so that no animal could withstand him, nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great. All right, let's pick that apart. I mean, certainly it pictures a kingdom that is on the advance. It's moving in this case in three different directions. It's expanding its kingdom in three different directions. So the word, but the word westward, it's kind of interesting, actually, uh, could be translated sea, the S-E-A kind of sea, not S-E-E. Meaning, pushing toward the sea. So it's a reference to the Mediterranean. That would be moving westward to the Mediterranean. So instead of using a word, it says westward, their point of reference was the Mediterranean. So, so it's advancing toward the sea. The word pushing, at least in the New King James Version, I believe some of the other versions use the word butting. So pushing is literally butting, like butting heads, which is, of course, what rams do, don't they? You know, you can see two rams fighting together and they're, boom, you know, butting their heads together. Give you a really tremendous headache. The four, the three, rather three directions represent the lands conquered by these two, this two-horned ram, all right, which we know to be the Medo-Persian

Empire. Westward, we can even put some names to it. Westward toward the sea would be Babylonia, Syria, Asia Minor, parts of Greece. Uh, northward, even northward, it'd be Armenia, Syria, Scythia, uh, some of the region around the Caspian Sea. Southward would be Egypt, Ethiopia, and other parts of what today would be Africa, and I gave you a map there to kind of see the expanse, you see the expanse of it. Number four on your outline there, no animal could withstand him. That phrase obviously refers to the invincibility of the empire, of this empire, the Medo-Persian. Nobody could stand against him. And which, uh, leads us to maybe conclude that in Daniel's vision, he saw other animals apparently trying to resist this ram, but they could not resist him. Fighting against him, but he's butting them away, and they cannot resist him. So possibly he saw other animals, which would represent other kingdoms, lesser kingdoms. They could not resist this, the, the ram. Nor was there any that could deliver from his hand. Means that, you know, that no alliance with other nations would be powerful enough to withstand the ram, this, the, the Medo-Persians. That's what they did in those days. I mean, it was still in our day, you know. Smaller countries align, align themselves with other countries, form alliances with other nations, and, uh, so they can become strong and be protected from maybe conquering, another conquering nation. But, uh, I guess the idea is that if they could have put all the remaining nations together, still would not have been strong enough to withstand the advance, uh, of the Medo-Persian

Empire. Powerful, very powerful. And then the phrase he did according to his will and became great, it simply refers to this empire's absolute power over all the world. All right, so this is what Daniel sees. We're not, you know, a few little references to, you know, you know, what this might connect to historically, but we're just talking about what he saw here. And now, I feel certain that Daniel was in awe of this ram. I mean, think about it. I mean, he took on all comers and no one could, uh, withstand him, could resist him. And, uh, so Daniel, you know, maybe he's in awe about its power and its greatness over all the other animals or other nations. Uh, but suddenly another animal appears in his vision and it changes everything. And that's really what verse five kind of says. And as I was considering, or as I was thinking about this, sudden, sudden. So Daniel next sees the goat with a notable horn. The goat with a notable horn. Verse five, first part of verse five, as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west. Came from the west, came from a different direction. Again, uh, the goat, an animal, represents an empire rising to power after the empire of the ram. So this is a, uh, another empire rising to world dominance and power. The empire of the ram came from the east, Persian, while the empire of the goat will come from the west. Which means, and this is kind of interesting, the Medo-Persian empire, the ram, will be the last of the eastern empires. Last of the two.

Babylon, Persia, eastern empires. The Medo-Persian will be the last of those. Persia is, is in the east. The Greek empire that is now to take dominance, the goat, will be the first of the European empires, of the two. Greece first, and then Rome. The first of the two European empires.

[33 : 09] Also in verse five, a male goat came across the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground. That's kind of interesting, isn't it? Across the surface of the whole earth, it simply means that the empire will conquer the entire world. That's just what he, what, what he's seeing.

And do it without touching the ground speaks of how quickly this empire will conquer and spread across the world. As if, if, if, if this empire could fly. And, you know, the goat running without touching the ground corresponds with the four-headed leopard in chapter seven that had wings. So it's the same kind of vision. And both images represent the Greek empire and it's very, very rapid conquest of the world. Also in verse five, as we go a little step further, and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. Notable horn. The word notable, which is the word used in the King, New King James and King James, means, really means literally conspicuous. It's conspicuous, meaning that you can't miss it.

That it's a very prominent feature in this, this goat's physique. I mean, this huge horn. I mean, goats usually have two horns, don't they? Well, this one initially had one. Very notable, very conspicuous, very prominent horn. And so it is, the horn is a king. A king that was very powerful.

And that king is Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great. And arguably, Alexander the Great was the most successful, powerful king in all of history. Conquered the world, the known world, the civilized world, and even a big part of the uncivilized world. I didn't, I don't think I put this in your notes.

I want to quote a historian. Alexander was one of the great, greatest military strategists of history.

[35 : 31] He was born in 356 BC, the son of a great conqueror in his own right, Philip of Macedon. Philip had united Greece with Macedonia and was planning to attack Persia when he was murdered.

Alexander, his son, educated under the famed Aristotle, was only 20 in 336 BC when he had succeeded his father as king. He was 20 years old. A year and a half later, he launched his attack against the Persians. In that same year, Alexander won the Battle of Cranicus in Asia Minor, thereby bringing to an end the dominance of the Medo-Persian Empire. And with his subsequent victories at Issus in 333 BC, and another place called Arbella in 331 BC, the conquest of Medo-Persia was complete, incredibly, within only three years. Three years he conquered the Persian Empire, Medo-Persian Empire, so that nobody could withstand, you know. Three years. Alexander had conquered the entire Near East. Next few verses kind of tell that story in verses 6 and 7. I'll just read it. Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. And I saw him confronting the ram. He was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, broke his two horns, and destroyed his two kings, two parts of the kingdom. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him, and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand. That pretty much tells the story. All right, so what did Daniel see? A ram with two unequal horns, a goat with one notable horn, and then third, let me just go ahead and get one more, and I think I'm going to get all the way through. A goat with four notable horns. All right, it's the same goat, but now it has four notable horns. Verse 8, therefore the male goat grew very great, but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven. All right, so the great, the Greek empire became the greatest empire on earth, greater than any that preceded it. Its territory spanned 1.5 million square miles, but as so often happens in history, the ram's great horn, that's its king, became prideful and was removed. That's what it means. The large horn was broken, broken. Now the large horn again is

Alexander the Great, right? And we know this from the history of Alexander the Great, that at the very pinnacle of his career, having conquered the known world, Alexander the Great died from a fever. Some think maybe malaria. He died at the age of 32. Still a young man. He conquered the whole world, and he died. Ironically, and this is kind of interesting, Achilles, you've heard of Achilles, you know, like the Achilles heel, you know, kind of the legend about the mythology of Achilles heel. Achilles was Alexander's hero. He was his hero, and he also believed that Achilles and Hercules were his ancestors. All right, these kind of demigods. They were his ancestors, and therefore he considered himself to be a god. Now, I don't think he did at the beginning, but eventually, I mean, you're conquering the entire world. Nobody can stand against you, and suddenly it just goes to his head. He thinks he's some kind of god, even to the point of requiring the people of his conquered nations, his conquered territories, require that they worship him as a god. And God will not share

his glory with another, and he put Alexander down. Killed him prematurely. I mean, as a very young man.

So, the four notable horns then represent four kings rising to power, ruling the empire in place of the one notable horn that was broken. Alexander the Great had two sons, Alexander the Fourth, and one by the name of Heracles, Heracles, or something like that. Both were murdered.

[40 : 34] And so, his heirs didn't take the throne, and then there were several years, a number of years, of chaos in the empire before it was eventually divided among four of his military leaders who took charge of the empire. That's four kings, four horns, four notable horns, which corresponds, again, with chapter seven and the four-headed leopard with wings that represented the Greek empire.

Then finally, we'll leave this for next time, the little horn, or what I've called the little, little horn. And here's where the vision begins to narrow, where it begins to zero in on God's people, Israel, and to the little land of Judah. And so, we'll get to that next time.

.