



THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Lesson Number 24



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ESV=English Standard Version (2001), KJV=King James Version (1611), NKJV=New King James Version (1982), NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

DANIEL'S SECOND VISION, THE RAM AND THE HE GOAT #1

^{8:1} In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. ² And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai. ³ Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. ⁴ I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great. ⁵ And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. ⁶ And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. ⁷ And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. ⁸ Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven." ^{KJV} (Dan 8:1-8)

INTRODUCTION

Beginning with the Babylonian captivity, circumstances for the chosen people radically changed. Things were never quite the same after that. The last

mentioned king of Israel was Hoshea (2 Kgs 18:10 – 729-720 B.C.). The last recorded king of Judah was Zedekiah, made king of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar

(1 Kgs 24:17 – 597-586 B.C.). **To this day, they have never again had a king.** The records suggest the Babylonian captivity cured Israel of its dreadful

After two years of relative silence, God resumes an explanation of the four kingdoms, by Given O. Blakely

OUTLINE

- ▶ THE THIRD YEAR AND ANOTHER VISION (8:1)
- ▶ THE TIME AND THE PLACE (8:2)
- ▶ A RAM WITH TWO HORNS (8:3)
- ▶ AGGRESSIVE AND POWERFUL (8:4)
- ▶ HE TOUCHED NOT THE GROUND AND HAD A NOTABLE HORN (8:5)
- ▶ THE HE-GOAT CONFRONTS THE RAM (8:6-7)
- ▶ THE HORN IS REPLACED BY FOUR NOTABLE ONES (8:8)

propensity to idolatry. The details of its elimination are not provided, but from the

end of that captivity on, idolatry was spoken of only in the past tense (Mal 2:11). Zechariah, who prophesied during the completion of Zerubbabel's temple, said, *"And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land"* (Zech 13:2). Later, during the time of Malachi, cold and lifeless religion settled in among the Jews, with the profaning of the altars and the robbery of God by not paying tithes (Mal 1:12; 3:8).

The Babylonian captivity was a line of demarcation. It marked the end of one era, and the beginning of another. Matthew uses it as a dividing line in the reckoning of Christ's genealogy. This lengthy chastisement was caused by Israel's disobedience, failing to give the land her sabbaths for four hundred and ninety years. Yet, the mighty God brought some good from it all.

The Intertestamental Period

Taken as a young man into the

Babylonian captivity, Daniel's ministry extended until the approximate year of 535 B.C. – a period of about 71 years. The last book of our Old Testament Scriptures (Malachi) was written about 138 years later (around 397 B.C.). That was the last Old Testament book that was written, with Nehemiah being written a short time earlier, around 444 B.C. Following the writings of these two prophets, so far as the written word is concerned, the heavens were silent until the birth of John the Baptist was announced.

During a period of well over four hundred years no significant Jewish king or prophet is mentioned. No book of the Bible is written, and no outstanding prophecy was passed on to succeeding generations. While there were some uninspired Jewish books written during this period, there was no known prophet from God at that time, nor any inspired book from Him.

However, we are not left totally in the dark concerning this seemingly unproductive time. **In order that the people of God not despair, a vision of this period was included in the Lord's revelations to Daniel.** In my understanding, this was intended to bring hope to those living during such dry and desolate times. It confirmed that God was ruling, fulfilling His goodpleasure, even though He did so without **contemporary** prophets and revelations. **Men must learn to live in view of what God has made known in previous times, particularly if no immediate revelations are being granted in their time.**

Daniel lived to see the Chaldean, or Babylonian empire, and the Medo-Persian as well. Additionally, however, he was given to see the next two kingdoms from a higher vantage point – the Grecian and Roman empires. Although he never lived to see their entrance into the political arena, he received more understanding concerning them than those who were contemporary with them.

This prophet was given

a lofty view of the period of time between the last of the Jewish Prophets and the appearance of John the Baptist. In addition, revelations given to him illuminated periods after Christ, even up to the end of time. **In all of them, the God of heaven was seen as controlling the affairs of men.** Kings and kingdoms were raised up and put down through His power, and His alone.

THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL SUCH PERIODS

It should not surprise us that there have been several periods during which known prophets, and revelation in any form, were exceedingly sparse. A brief review of such periods is profitable.

- ▣ From Abel to Seth, whom God appointed as another seed in the place of Abel (Gen 4:25) – estimated to be **over one hundred and thirty years** (3901-3770 B.C.).
- ▣ From Seth to Enoch – a period estimated to be about **five hundred years** (3770 - 3274 B.C.). A single revelation is recorded to have been given to Enoch (Jude 1:14-15).
- ▣ From Enoch to Noah – a period of **around four hundred and twenty-nine years** (3274-2845 B.C.). Three revelations were given to Noah (Gen 6:13; 9:3-6; 9:8-17).
- ▣ From Noah to Abraham – a period of around **eight hundred and ninety years** (2845-1955 B.C.).

INTERTESTAMENTAL TIMES

1. Alexander the Great (Crowned 336 B.C., 199 years after Daniel, and 61 years after the writing of Malachi.)
 - Greek Macedonian 330 - 323 BCE
2. Selucid Dynasty
3. Roman rule - 63 BCE
 - Pompey takes over and establishes an ethnarch
 - John Hyrcanus - ethnarch 63 - 40 BCE
 - Herod the Great - ethnarch 40 - 4 BCE
 - a Built the temple
 - b Kingdom divided after his death
 - (1. Philip II (Luke 3:1)
 - (2. Archelaus (Matt 2:22)
 - (3. Herod Antipas - 4 BCE - 39 CE (Matt 14:1)

<http://www.gprep.pvt.k12.md.us/~smouser/inter.html>

After two years of relative silence, God resumes an explanation of the four kingdoms, by Given O. Blakely

- ▣ From Abraham to Moses – a period of four hundred and twenty-seven years (1955-1528). During this period, several revelations were given to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. From the death of Joseph to Moses' calling there as **a period of at least eighty years** of Divine silence (1528-1448 B.C.).
- ▣ From Malachi to John the Baptist – **a period of approximately 424 years** (397 B.C. A.D. 27).

for the ninth chapter, in which the Messiah and His vicarious death will be introduced. It is designed to teach us that the world was not out of control while the people waited for the Messiah. Although ruthless governments arose, running roughshod over the whole world, yet God was in control, sovereignly governing the affairs of the world in a most minute and purposeful way.

Further, these governments all had some interface with the chosen

(Rom 1:16; Gal 3:18).

- ▣ The Roman empire also persecuted the Jews, exercising dominion over them until the day of Christ and beyond. It also provided a context in which the Gospel was made known.

What we have in this intertestamental period is God arranging the affairs of men, preparing for the coming of the Redeemer. **Purposefully, He was working behind the scenes, setting the stage for the overthrow of sin and death.**

All of the particulars are not revealed, and therefore we should not become unduly curious about them. However, enough is made known to assure our hearts that in the midst of political violence, the displacement of kingdoms, and the rise of despots, the will of the Lord was being done. Nothing was out of control. No kingdom extended itself a single second beyond the time appointed by God for their dominion. No king, however influential, created circumstances that put the God of heaven at a disadvantage.

Nothing transpiring upon the earth had an impact upon the purpose of God, causing it to be delayed, postponed, or temporarily put on hold. The wheels of Divine purpose rolled onward.

THE FACT THAT MEN MAY NOT HEAR FROM GOD HAS NO BEARING WHATSOEVER UPON WHETHER OR NOT HE IS RULING.

However, even though revelation may have been sparse, or even non-existent, during these times, God was still the *"Governor among the nations,"* ruling in all the earth (Psa 22:28). **The fact that men may not hear from God has no bearing whatsoever upon whether or not He is ruling.** This section of Daniel confirms this to be true.

SETTING THE STAGE

The development of this intertestamental period is setting the stage

people, and played a role in the development of the purpose of God.

- ▣ The Babylonian empire was used to the children of Judah.
- ▣ The Medo-Persian empire was used to begin the rebuilding of the Temple and the holy city.
- ▣ The Grecian empire was used to unite world in language, so that the general term for the Gentiles became "Greek"

THE THIRD YEAR AND ANOTHER VISION

^{8:1} *In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first."*

What occurred to Daniel, or what experiences he had, between the vision of chapter seven and this one, we do not know. A period of two years have passed since that first vision – a vision which left Daniel cogitating upon its significance (7:28). So far as the text is concerned, we left Daniel in deep thought two years ago. Now, another vision is vouchsafed to him. I say "vouchsafed" to him because this was a stewardship. The prophet is not

given a vision to entertain him, or to satisfy his personal curiosity. **He will become a custodian of this vision.** As such, he will be responsible for passing it on to us, that we might receive "perseverance" and "encouragement" through the Scriptures ^{NASB} (Rom 15:4).

THE THIRD YEAR

"In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me . . ." Belshazzar is mentioned eight times in the Scriptures – all by Daniel. The first six times related to the feast he threw the last day of his life. The last two were reference points for what occurred to Daniel. In fact, were it not for Daniel,

Belshazzar would never have been mentioned at all. It was Daniel who made the feast of Belshazzar significant enough to be recorded in Scripture, for only a man of God could interpret the message of God given to Belshazzar.

Thus Belshazzar's reign, from the heavenly perspective is seen from two perspectives. First, it was a reference point the first two visions given to Daniel. Second, his was the reign that concluded the dominance of Babylon. The night he prepared the feast for a thousand of his nobles, he was told *"Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and the Persians"* (5:28). That very night, *"Darius*

the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old” (5:31).

While Belshazzar was a ruler in the empire that governed the whole world, he was only a weightless mote on the scale of Divine purpose.

Historical Babylonian records indicate Belshazzar ruled as a coregent for about fifteen years, from 553 B.C. to 539 B.C. UNGER'S BIBLE DOCTIONARY That places this vision around 550, or twelve years before the demise of Babylon. This vision was, then, given in considerable advance of the fall of Babylon and the initial dominance of the Medo-Persian empire.

EVEN UNTO ME

“... *even unto me Daniel* . . . ” In speaking in this manner, Daniel is distinguishing his own vision from the dreams given to Nebuchadnezzar (2:3; 4:5), and the writing on the wall delivered to Belshazzar (5:5). This is not a vision given to another and interpreted by Daniel. Rather, it is another vision given personally to him, as one who is “*a man greatly beloved*” by God (9:23; 10:11,19).

AFTER THAT

“... *after that which appeared unto me at the first.*” Other versions read, “*after the one that appeared to me the first time,*”^{NKJV} “*subsequent to the one which appeared to me previously,*”^{NASB} “*after the one that had already appeared to me,*”^{NIV} and “*after what I had seen in the beginning.*”^{DOUAY}

The first vision appeared to Daniel in the first year of Belshazzar's reign, or around 553 B.C. That first vision was at least fifty three years after Daniel's deportation to Babylon, or when he was

in them. For example, one time Jesus healed two blind men by touching their eyes (Matt 9:27-29). Another blind man was healed when the Lord “*spit on his eyes, and put His hands upon him*” (Mark

EVEN THOUGH DANIEL “HAD UNDERSTANDING IN ALL VISIONS AND DREAMS,” HIS FIRST VISION DID NOT COME UNTIL THE LATTER PART OF HIS LIFE, FIFTY-THREE YEARS AFTER HE BECAME CAPTIVE OF BABYLON.

between sixty and seventy years of age. **Even though Daniel “had understanding in all visions and dreams,” his first vision did not come until the latter part of his life, fifty-three years after he became captive of Babylon.**

There is certainly something to be seen here of the ways of God. They certainly are not the ways of man. Joseph received dreams from God when he was very young (Gen 37:5,9), and much later was given wisdom to interpret the dreams of others (Gen 40:5-16; 41:7-32). Daniel first was the interpreter of the dreams of others, and was given his own visions later in life.

Such are the ways of God that men cannot see consistent -patterns

8:22-23). Yet another blind was healed by Jesus merely speaking a word (Mark 10:46). Jesus healed another blind man by making clay out of spittle, anointing the man's eyes with the clay, and telling him to wash in the pool of Siloam (John 9:6-7). **Those with a penchant for patterns will certainly find no procedure for healing blind people in Scripture – or, for that matter, for any other Divine working.**

Only faith can behold the working of the Lord with profit. It is simply too challenging for man's unaided intellect. Now, in faithfulness to God, Daniel proceeds to give the particulars of his second vision. It was a private vision, but contained a universal message. It was not for him alone, but for us also. He is therefore faithful to declare it.

THE TIME AND THE PLACE

“² And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.”

Remember, the time Daniel received this vision was during the reign of Babylon. The “*head of gold*” is still in place, with Belshazzar at the head of the province of Babylon. What Daniel now

sees is the rise of another empire – the very one that will supplant the Babylonian, or Chaldean, empire.

Thus the Lord is showing Daniel more of the same thing revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in his first dream, and to Daniel in his first vision. Daniel will live to see this displacement, and therefore the Lord opens it further to him. **He does this to assure the prophet's heart, for**

things that are known to the Lord are also controlled by Him.

Saints in succeeding generations will also derive great comfort from this revelation. First, it will enable them to properly assess the past, not leaving such assessments to the wise men of the world. Second, it confirms the world and time itself are moving toward the time appointed when the saints will possess the kingdom.

After two years of relative silence, God resumes an explanation of the four kingdoms, by Given O. Blakely

I SAW IN A VISION

“And I saw in a vision . . . ” A “vision” is not something beheld with the flesh, or with human eyes. Rather, it is a revelation from God. **It is something impressed upon the mind without the assistance of fleshly eyes.** It is as though the individual was given to see beneath the surface of appearance with the eyes of understanding. The Lord told Aaron and Miriam that He would make Himself known to genuine prophets in a vision, and speak to them in dreams (Num 12:6).

(2 Cor 12:1).

- ▣ When the angel of the Lord appeared to Zachariah, he did so in a “vision” (Lk 1:22).
- ▣ The women who saw angels at the tomb of Jesus are said to have seen “a vision of angels” (Lk 24:23).
- ▣ When calling Ananias to further instruct Saul of Tarsus, He did so through a “vision” (Acts 9:10).
- ▣ When the Lord appeared to both Cornelius and Peter, He did so

This is the first mention of “Shushan” in the book of Daniel. **This was the place of rule for the Persians.** It is where Nehemiah was later employed (Neh 1:1), and where Esther resided during the reign of the Persians (Esth 1:2;9:12).

Shushan was over two hundred miles from Babylon. It is not likely that Daniel, a captive in Babylon, was given leave to travel there. **It was in his vision that he was transported to Shushan,** even as Ezekiel was transported in a vision to Jerusalem (Ezek 8:3). Daniel was lifted above himself and the world in this vision, transported by the Spirit to the citadel of Persia, to which this vision pertained.

A VISION, THEREFORE, IS NOT SOMETHING NEBULOUS AND STRANGE. NEITHER, INDEED, IS IT SOMETHING ADDRESSED TO THE FLESHLY SENSES. IT IS ONE OF THE MEANS THE LORD USES TO COMMUNICATE WITH MEN, SHOWING THEM HIS WILL AND PURPOSE IN A SORT OF ANIMATED FORM.

In his vision, Daniel is transported to the palace, “which is in the province of Elam.” There is no evidence that this palace had been built at the time of this vision. Thus, Daniel is transported into the future, and given to see surroundings that were not yet actually established. He will see the vision from within the empire to which it pertained. I am sure this is a proper view of the vision, for after it had been given to him, Daniel said he “*rose up, and did the king’s business*” (v 27). The king had to be Belshazzar, during whose reign the vision occurred. It is doubtful such business could be conducted from Shushan.

There are several notable visions in Scripture. I relate these to confirm the nature of a vision.

- ▣ God appeared to Abram in a vision, confirming the covenant with him (Gen 15:1).
- ▣ Balaam saw a vision of the Almighty (Gen 24:4,16).
- ▣ The appearance of the Lord to young Samuel is called a “vision” (1 Sam 3:15).
- ▣ When God made known to David that He was going to make him a “house,” the revelation was called a “vision” (2 Sam 7:17).
- ▣ The book of Isaiah is referred to as a “vision” (2 Chron 32:32; Isa 1:1).
- ▣ Ezekiel was given “visions of God” (Ezek 1:1; 11:24; 43:4).
- ▣ Nehuchadnezzar’s dream of the great statue was revealed to Daniel in a “vision” (Dan 2:19).
- ▣ The apostle Paul was given “visions”

through “visions” (Acts 10:3,17;11:5).

- ▣ When the Lord called Paul and company into Macedonia, He did so through a “vision” (Acts 16:9).
- ▣ The Lord instructed Paul to stay on in Corinth, doing so through a “vision” (Acts 18:9).
- ▣ Paul refers to his calling on the road to Damascus as a “heavenly vision” (Acts 26:19).
- ▣ Aspects of the revelation given to John on the Isle of Patmos were called a “vision” (Rev 9:17).

A vision, therefore, is not something nebulous and strange. Neither, indeed, is it something addressed to the fleshly senses. It is one of the means the Lord uses to communicate with men, showing them His will and purpose in a sort of animated form.

I WAS AT SHUSHAN

“ . . . and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam . . . ”

BY THE RIVER ULAI

“ . . . and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.” This river flowed by the city of Shushan, eventually merging with the Tigris and the Euphrates. Again, Daniel was not bodily by this river, but was transported there in the vision. **The Lord took him in spirit to the place from which the next power would arise.**

You see with what precision the vision is given, and how precisely the prophet remembers it. **It is the nature of the Holy Spirit to sharpen our powers of discernment, enabling particulars to be both seen and recalled.**

There is a tendency among some to attribute vague occurrences and experiences of unconsciousness to the

The Medo-Persians were a breast and arms of silver. The Grecian kingdom was a belly and thighs of brass. The Roman empire was legs of iron, and feet of a mixture of iron and clay. There was a noticeable decline in their value.

In this vision, there was a sense in which all of the kingdoms stood and fell together. They all functioned according to worldly principles. They all tended to deteriorate. They all were temporary. They all were felled by the same opposing power, which was the kingdom of God, which means they all operated in contradiction of that heavenly kingdom.

In this first representation, the kingdoms of the world were brought to an end by means of God's kingdom. It began as a small stone, finally becoming a mountain that filled the whole earth. **Thus we started with earthly kingdoms, and ended with the Kingdom of God being the only kingdom.**

Our Second Exposure

Our second exposure to the same four kingdoms viewed them according to their nature. They all surfaced from the sea of agitated humanity. They were all beastly – i.e., crude in power as compared with the power of the God of heaven. In this vision, the kingdoms were not viewed as a whole, but as individual kingdoms with differing natures. Babylon was like a lordly lion with the wings of an eagle, permitting it to move swiftly and with majesty. The Medo-Persians were like a vicious bear, tearing out the ribs of its opponents. But one side of the bear was more powerful than the other, and it raised up on that side. The Grecian empire was likened to a swift leopard that also moved swiftly, craftily devouring its prey. It had four heads, or came to be ruled by four different entities. The Roman empire was a beast unlike any of the others. It had iron teeth, and nails of brass, eating up its victims and stamping the residue that fell to the ground into pieces. It had ten divisions, from which a boastful and unparalleled ruler rose. That ruler made war with the saints.

In this vision, God again brings an end to the kingdoms of the world. However, there are some added features.

First, we are introduced to the Messiah, depicted as “one like unto the Son of man.” The kingdom is given to Him as He returns to heaven in a cloud and stands before the “Ancient of days,” who is the God of heaven. Second, the kingdom is also given to the saints of the most high God, and the time comes when they possess it in all of its glory and dominion. **Thus we again started with earthly kingdoms, and ended with the Kingdom of God being the only kingdom.** This time the kingdom is seen as being governed by the Son of man, and eventually given to the saints, or people, of the most High God.

Our Third Exposure

other, and the higher came up last.” The first vision of these kingdoms did not make known the superiority of one of the parts of this kingdom. The second vision revealed that one part would be more dominant, as the bear lifted itself one side. Now a special point is made of one part of the kingdom coming into dominance. *“One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later”* (Dan 8:3). That is, the empire started out as seemingly co-equal kingdoms, although the Medes were prominent at the first: *“the Medes and Persians”* (5:28; 6:8,12,15). However, one of these kingdoms would rise to prominence – even over the other one.

Persian Prominence

THUS WE AGAIN STARTED WITH EARTHLY KINGDOMS, AND ENDED WITH THE KINGDOM OF GOD BEING THE ONLY KINGDOM. THIS TIME THE KINGDOM IS SEEN AS BEING GOVERNED BY THE SON OF MAN, AND EVENTUALLY GIVEN TO THE SAINTS, OR PEOPLE, OF THE MOST HIGH GOD.

Now we zero in on just two of the kingdoms. The first kingdom, Babylon, is ignored altogether. This vision is given during the reign of Belshazzar, who would be the last king of Babylon. Thus, transported to the kingdom of Persia itself, Daniel will be shown the kingdom that will displace Babylon, and how it will itself be cast down. The first two visions started with Babylon. This one starts with the Medo-Persia empire.

Once again, the duality of this kingdom is accented. First we saw it as a breast with two arms of silver. Then we saw it as a bear, raised up on one side. Now we see it as a ram with two significant horns. Later the identity of these horns is revealed. *“The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia”* (Dan 8:20).

ONE WAS HIGHER, AND CAME UP LAST

“ . . . but one was higher than the

When Babylon was displaced, it was by *“the Medes.”* Speaking of the overthrow of Babylon Isaiah said, *“Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them . . . And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah”* (Isa 13:17-19). Jeremiah declared the same thing. *“Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple”* (Jer 51:11,28). Yet, when the Lord actually brought the judgment, He revealed to Belshazzar that his kingdom was given to *“the Medes and the Persians”* (Dan 5:28). When Belshazzar was killed, *“Darius the Mede took the kingdom”* (5:31).

However, as time progressed, the horn of Persia outgrew the horn of the

Medes, and it became the most prominent kingdom. That shift of power is revealed to Daniel in this vision – several years before it actually occurred, and even before Babylon was overthrown. While it is declared elsewhere, Daniel himself emphasizes this shift of power in accounting for his long influence. “So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian” (Dan 6:28). He marked the duration of his reign “even unto the first year of king Cyrus” (Dan 1:21). Also, he details a vision he received “in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia” (10:1).

Persia became the prominent part of the kingdom with the rapid rise of

rebuild Jerusalem through Cyrus, whom God called “My shepherd.” Thus it is written, “That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, **Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: That saith of Cyrus, He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid**” (Isa 44:28).

God communicated a word to Cyrus, although we do not know precisely

from the west, that there is none beside Me. I am the LORD, and there is none else” (Isa 45:1-6).

Ezra records the edict issued by Cyrus, in which he confessed the call of God upon him. It is a remarkable record, especially when you consider this man was the king of Persia. “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, **that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem**” (Ezra 1:1-4).

NEBUCHADNEZZAR PLAYED A ROLE IN DIVINE PURPOSE BY BEING THE MEANS GOD USED TO CHASTEN ISRAEL. DARIUS PLAYED A ROLE IN THAT PURPOSE BY BRINGING DOWN BABYLON, ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF THE LORD. CYRUS ALSO PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN THE PURPOSE OF GOD. THAT ROLE IS WHAT VAULTED PERSIA INTO PROMINENCE.

Cyrus about the time the captives of Judah began to return to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity. This appears to have occurred about two years after the fall of Babylon, or around 536 B.C. At that point, the bear lifted itself up on one side, and one of the horns on the ram grew longer and reached higher than the other. The Medo-Persian empire spread to its widest extremities during the reign of “Cyrus the Persian.”

The Reason for the Prominence

Nebuchadnezzar played a role in Divine purpose by being the means God used to chasten Israel. Darius played a role in that purpose by bringing down Babylon, according to the word of the Lord. Cyrus also plays a vital role in the purpose of God. **That role is what vaulted Persia into prominence.**

Isaiah prophesied that God would

how. It appears as though it came through Isaiah. Here is that word. “Thus saith the LORD to **His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, **though thou hast not known Me. I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me. That they may know from the rising of the sun, and****

The word spoken by Jeremiah related to the seventy year Babylonian captivity, and is recorded in Jeremiah 25:12-14 and 29:10. In particular, Jeremiah spoke of the rebuilding of Jerusalem in Jeremiah 33:7-13.

Thus, it is revealed, Cyrus was raised up to do the following.

- ▣ To subdue nations (Isa 45:1).
- ▣ For the sake of His people Israel (Isa 45:4).
- ▣ That men everywhere might know God is God, and none else (Isa 45:6).
- ▣ To fulfill the word of Jeremiah (Ezra 1:1).
- ▣ To gather the children of Judah together to build the house of the Lord (Ezra 1:3).
- ▣ To build God’s house in Jerusalem of

After two years of relative silence, God resumes an explanation of the four kingdoms, by Given O. Blakely

Judah (Ezra 1:2).

- ▣ To gather an offering for the construction of that house, which was the Temple (Ezra 1:4).
- ▣ To contribute to the project from his own treasury (Ezra 3:7).
- ▣ To return the vessels of the Temple that were taken by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezra 5:13-14).
- ▣ To ensure that the foundations of God's house were laid properly (Ezra 6:3-4).

In order for this to be accomplished expeditiously and to the glory of God, great power was given to Cyrus. This power caused the Persian part of the empire to become dominant. Thus God held his right hand, subdued nations before him, stripped kings of their armor making them vulnerable to him, and opened protective gates before him (Isa 45:1). God went before Cyrus, making crooked places straight, breaking hindering gates of brass, and cutting through bars of iron (Isa 45:2). He gave him treasures that were hidden in darkness, and riches stored in secret places (Isa 45:3). Of Cyrus the Persian God said, *"I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts"* (Isa 45:13). He was given *"all the kingdoms of the earth"* in order that he might build the house of the Lord (Ezra 1:2).

That is why one of the rams horns grew larger than the other.
That is why Persia became dominant.

Now Daniel is shown the demise of that empire after the purpose for which it was elevated had been accomplished.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

If so much can be said about Babylon, the Medes and Persians, the Grecians, and the Romans, what can be said of the Kingdom of God? If such a lengthy revelation was given of these temporary empires, all of which would give way to the kingdom of God, what can be said of the kingdom that crushed them

all – the one set up by the God of heaven?

When Jesus came preaching, He proclaimed, *"the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matt 4:17). When Jesus confronted multitudes that wanted to stay with them, He said, *"I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also"* (Lk 4:43). When He sent out the twelve, He commissioned them, *"preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matt 10:7). When he told a certain young man to follow him, and the man requested permission to go and bury his father, Jesus replied, *"Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God"* (Luke 9:60).

Philip preached *"the things concerning the kingdom of God"* (Acts 8:12). Paul told the Ephesian elders he had gone among them *"preaching the*

dear Son" (Col 1:13).

- ▣ *"Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer"* (2 Thess 1:5).
- ▣ *"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"* (James 2:5).
- ▣ *"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"* (2 Pet 1:11).

If it were not for this kingdom, we would read nothing about these other kingdoms in Scripture. They were only

IF SO MUCH CAN BE SAID ABOUT BABYLON, THE MEDES AND PERSIANS, THE GRECIANS, AND THE ROMANS, WHAT CAN BE SAID OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

kingdom of God" (Acts 20:25). When he was captive in Rome, and given his own house and appointed a time to speak to the people, he was found *"preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ"* (Acts 28:31).

The Epistles are filled with direct and indirect references to *"the kingdom of God."* All of them are most significant. Some of them include the following.

- ▣ *"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit"* (Rom 14:17).
- ▣ *"For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power"* (1 Cor 4:20).
- ▣ *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his*

pawns on the Divine trestle board, used by Him in the establishment of His own everlasting kingdom among men.

AN OBSERVATION

Prior to the coming of Christ Jesus, considerable was said of earthly kingdoms. Nearly all of these references are in relation to the Israelites, the chosen people of God. They include Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Medes and Persians, and others. Several nations were also mentioned in regards to their gods: i.e., *"the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines"* (Judges 10:5).

With the advent of Jesus and the *"day of salvation,"* the references to nations changed. In the book of Acts, kingdoms are mentioned in regards to the hearing of the Gospel. On the day of

Pentecost, for example, we read of “Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome . . . Cretes and Arabians” (Acts 2:9-11). There is reference of preaching the Gospel in “Spain,” and “Rome” as well (Rom 15:24; Acts 23:11).

However, the thrust is now upon spiritual powers, not earthly

governments. Believers are not said to contend with nations as Israel did, but with “principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph 6:12).

Prior to this glorious time of Divine acceptance, God was maneuvering the nations in order to prepare for the coming of His Son. Now that the Son has come, our attention is turned to His kingdom, which is “over all” (Eph 1:22). Even though great political kingdoms have

arisen since Jesus, the emphasis of revelation is not placed upon them. Whatever success they enjoy, it is only temporal, and they will all yield to the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ.

While care must be taken not to draw rigid theological lines on this matter, we must be equally careful to avoid a theology that places the accent upon any worldly kingdom – even one headed up by Jesus! Such an emphasis is not in harmony with the salvation of our God.

AGGRESSIVE AND POWERFUL

“⁴ I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.”

“I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward . . .”

The ram is pictured as standing in the East, facing the West, with the North and South on his right and left. This particular figure accents the expansion of the Medo-Persian empire.

would come from the East. “Who raised up the righteous **man from the east**, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow” (Isa 41:2). That “righteous man” is later referred to as “Cyrus,” whom God calls “My shepherd” (Isa 44:28). He is also called the Lord’s “anointed” (Isa 45:1). Later in Isaiah, the Lord refers to Cyrus as “a ravenous bird” that would be called “from the East” (Isa 46:11).

THE RAM IS PICTURED AS STANDING IN THE EAST, FACING THE WEST, WITH THE NORTH AND SOUTH ON HIS RIGHT AND LEFT. THIS PARTICULAR FIGURE ACCENTS THE EXPANSION OF THE MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE.

It is my understanding that the ram pushing toward the three directions West, North, and South, agree with the previous figure of a bear with THREE ribs in his mouth (7:5), although is not intended to be the exclusive fulfillment of that figure. One man has said “The principle theater of their wars was against the SCYTHIANS, northward; against the GREEKS, westward; and against the EGYPTIANS, southward.”^{CALMET} My only point in providing this detail is to confirm the precision of the prophecy, and how it perfectly conforms with Scripture primarily, and history secondarily. For those who wish to take the time to pursue a more thorough knowledge of these things, it will become apparent that God is a God of precision. **His revelations are noted for their exactness.**

We now come to the conquests of the Medo-Persians, with the accent upon the Persians, and the reign of Cyrus in particular. Both Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus played significant roles in the fulfilling of the will of the Lord: Nebuchadnezzar in the chastening of Israel, and Cyrus in their recovery from the chastening. Further, both are mentioned by name. Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned ninety times in Scripture, and Cyrus twenty-three. Thus, the text before us is in perfect harmony with the previous revelations of this kingdom in the Chronicles, Ezra, and Isaiah. Divine precision is in the text.

THE PUSHING RAM

In the West the Medo-Persian empire embraced Babylonia, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Asia Minor. In the North it embraced Colchis, Armenia, Iberia, and the regions around the Caspian Sea. In the South it included Palestine, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Lybia.^{Lengerke} It extended itself further than Babylon, and was even more global than the head of gold, or the lion with the wings of an eagle.

Notice, the ram is not said to have pushed toward the East. The conquests of the Medo-Persians did not extend into the East. Rather, speaking of Cyrus the Persian, Isaiah wrote that he

Once again, I want to emphasize that the successful thrust of the Persians was not owing to their military superiority. Rather, this was the result of

After two years of relative silence, God resumes an explanation of the four kingdoms, by Given O. Blakely

Divine activity that had particular regard to the recovery of Judah from the Babylonian captivity. God is the one who ultimately gave the ram its power.

NO BEASTS COULD STAND BEFORE HIM

“... so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand . . .” Other versions read, “so that no animal could withstand him,”^{NKJV} “no other beasts could stand before him,”^{NASB} and “all beasts were powerless to withstand it.”^{NRSV}

Notice how all other kingdoms are referred to as “beasts.” That is because, depending upon the flesh, they are brutish and crude, as compared to the God of heaven and the wise fulfillment of His purposes.

This expression is another way of affirming what Cyrus himself confessed. “All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given unto me” (2 Chron 36:23). It affirms the fulfillment of what God said to Cyrus. “Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron” (Isa 45:1-2).

Thus the Scriptures account in a most precise manner the success of the pushing ram – the Medo-Persian empire, particularly under the leadership of Cyrus the Persian. As with Nebuchadnezzar, he received his power for God, and he received it to fulfill the purpose of God.

HE DID ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, AND BECAME GREAT

“... but he did according to his will, and became great.” Other versions read, “he did as he pleased and magnified himself,”^{NASB} “it did as it pleased, and became strong,”^{NRSV} “but he did whatever his pleasure was and made himself great,”^{BBE} and “it hath done according to its pleasure, and hath exerted itself.”

This is the inspired way of saying

nothing could hinder the spread of the Medo-Persian empire, especially under the leadership of “Cyrus the Persian.” This is language that denotes rapid spread, apparent success, and unhindered progress. Keep in mind, there is no such power except it come from God.

Not Strange Language

This kind of language is not strange to us; i.e., an earthly monarch doing whatever he desires. The same thing was also said of Nebuchadnezzar, and in language that is most arresting. “And for the majesty that He [God] gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: **whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down**”

– doing whatever one desires – is attributed to heathen rulers like Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus? **It is because God gave them their power.** This is precisely what is meant by Paul’s comments about earthly government. “Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God”^{NASB} (Rom 13:1). This is why God punished the nations that did not subject themselves to Nebuchadnezzar, including Judah, whom God was chastening through him. “Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live. Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the LORD hath spoken against the nation that will not

THUS THE SCRIPTURES ACCOUNT IN A MOST PRECISE MANNER THE SUCCESS OF THE PUSHING RAM – THE MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE, PARTICULARLY UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF CYRUS THE PERSIAN. AS WITH NEBUCHADNEZZAR, HE RECEIVED HIS POWER FOR GOD, AND HE RECEIVED IT TO FULFILL THE PURPOSE OF GOD.

(Dan 5:19).

Later in Daniel, he will speak of an opponent of the people of God, who will also “do according to his will” (11:3,36).

Earlier in Daniel, this very thing was said of the God of heaven Himself: “He doeth **according to His will** in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth” (Dan 4:35).

The Psalmist wrote, “But our God is in the heavens: **He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased**” (Psa 115:3). In speaking of the efficacy of prayer, John wrote, “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing **according to His will**, He heareth us” (1 John 5:14).

How is it that this Divine quality

serve the king of Babylon?” (Jer 27:13).

This should not surprise us, or cause our hearts to quake in fear of men. It has already been said of God, “He removeth kings, and setteth up kings” (Dan 2:21), and “the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men” (Dan 4:17).

It is not possible that Cyrus could have been so successful if God did not allow it for His own purposes. Such power cannot be taken to men independently of the dispensation of God. In fact, it is God who CAUSED Cyrus to flourish, and the Medo-Persian empire to spread. That spread was also under His strict control, and would last no longer than the time God’s own determined purpose was being served.

WILL NOT JESUS DO ACCORDING TO HIS WILL? WILL NOT HIS KINGDOM SPREAD, PUTTING DOWN ALL OTHER POWERS, AND SUBDUING ALL OPPONENTS? IS IT NOT WRITTEN THAT HE WILL “PUT DOWN ALL RULE AND ALL AUTHORITY AND ALL POWER”

Comment
The Saints

If such can be said of a heathen king whom God used, **what can be said of those who are in Christ Jesus, toward whom exceeding great power has been directed.** Solemnly, and with great grace, the saints are informed of the focus of Divine power upon them. “. . . that ye may know . . . what is the **exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power**” (Eph 1:18-19). And again, “**Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us**” (Eph 3:20).

The Lord Jesus Christ

On a much larger scale, what can be said of the exalted Christ to whom “*all power in heaven and earth*” has been given (Matt 28:18). What of the reign of King Jesus, of whom it is said, “*Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him*” (1 Pet 3:22). What of Him who has been exalted “*Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come*” (Eph 1:21).

Will not Jesus do according to His will? Will not His Kingdom spread, putting down all other powers, and subduing all opponents? Is it not written that He will “*put down all rule and all*

authority and all power” (1 Cor 15:24)?

If Nebuchadnezzar could build Babylon, and Cyrus could build Persia, what may be said of Christ’s words, “*I will build my church*” (Matt 16:18). **Rest assured, more will not be said of kings Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus than of the King of kings and Lord of lords!** God gave some power to them. He gave “*all power*” to Jesus!

It is true that at this present time, according to appearance, it does not look as though Jesus is exalted, or that He has all power in heaven and earth. **But he does!** There are some powers He has not yet openly confronted, but they still belong to Him and are under His control. When He deals with them, they will fall.

Like Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus, He is allowing them to run their course until He is finished with them. But the time is coming when they will all lose their power, just as surely as Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus lost theirs! That is a lesson we must glean from this passage.

HE TOUCHED NOT THE GROUND, AND HAD A NOTABLE HORN

“*5 And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.*” The vision now expands, and the ram is no longer its center. Daniel has seen a time and a season given to the ram. Now he will see a time and a season given to another ruler. God will remove one king and set up another. He will cast down one empire, and raise up another. **Keep in mind, we are beholding the working of God during a period of time in which there was no known prophet, and during which no Scripture was written.** Yet, the Lord is confirming that He is imminent in the affairs of men, whether they are aware of it or not.

WHILE I WAS CONSIDERING

“*And as I was considering . . .*”
Once again we see how the things of God

are unfolded as the attentiveness and consideration of men are drawn into the matter.

To “*consider*” is to look well into, consider diligently, and be attentive. The Lord was showing something to Daniel, and the prophet devoted himself heartily to the revelation, refusing to be distracted from it. “*Considering*” is giving “*attendance*” or attention to something (1 Tim 4:13). It is wrapping our mind around a specific thing, and refusing to be drawn away from it.

Many a professing believer comes short of obtaining an understanding of the things of God simply because they do not give themselves to a consideration of them. They attempt to move about upon the truth as a spider walks upon the water. They never really give themselves to the understanding of holy things. They

So swift was the career of Alexander’s conquests, that the goat seems to speed along without so much as touching the ground. (Isaiah 5:26-29. Comp. 1 Macc. 1:3) With irresistible fury, in the great battles of the Granicus (B.C. 334), Issus (B.C. 333), and Arbela (B.C. 331), he stamps to pieces the power of Persia and of its king, Darius Codomannus. In this short space of time Alexander conquers Syria, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Tyre, Gaza, Egypt, Babylonia, Persia, Media, Hyrcania, Aria, and Arachosia. In B.C. 330 Darius was murdered by Bessus, and Alexander became lord of his kingdom. In B.C. 329 the Greek King conquered Bactria, crossed the Oxus and Jaxartes, and defeated the Scythians. In B.C. 328 he conquered Sogdiana. In B.C. 327 and 326 he crossed the Indus, Hydaspes, and Akesines, subdued Northern and Western India, and — compelled by the discontent of his troops to pause in his career of victory — sailed down the Hydaspes and Indus to the Ocean.

Expositor’s Bible

After two years of relative silence, God resumes an explanation of the four kingdoms, by Given O. Blakely

are content to deal only with surface matters. Studiously they avoid anything pertaining to life and godliness that challenge the mind, or require extended thought and deliberation. This approach to the truth of God is quite prominent in the modern church, and those caught up in it have, by that very involvement, forfeited perceptions and understanding that belong to them by virtue of their union with Christ.

HE CAME FROM THE WEST

“... behold, an he goat came from the West on the face of the whole earth . . .” Other versions read, “suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth,”^{NKJV} “a male goat was coming from the West over the surface of the whole earth,”^{NASB} and “a he-goat from the west, encroaching over the entire surface of the world.”^{NJB}

Later this “he-goat” is referred to as a “rough,” or “shaggy goat.” It is then identified as “the king of Grecia.” That this is the same goat mentioned in this text is clear from the following: “And the rough goat is the king of Grecia” (Dan 8:21a). This is, then, the Grecian kingdom, and the first king of that kingdom that would displace the Medo-Persian empire.



Grecian Art

It is not by coincidence that historical findings confirm the Grecian empire used a one-horned goat as its symbol. A replica of Grecian art is provided in confirmation of this.

The Greek empire was to the West of the Persian empire, and thus the he-goat is said to come “from the West.”

HE TOUCHED NOT THE GROUND

“... and touched not the ground . . .” Other versions read, “without touching the ground,”^{NKJV} and “without touching the earth.”^{BBE}

The idea is that this goat rapidly moved across the face of the earth without touching the ground – flying, as it were,

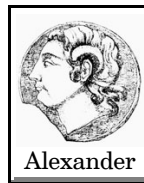
with swiftness and great power. Thus the NIV reads, “crossing the whole earth without touching the ground.” **The picture is one of rapid movement and speedy conquests.** This depiction perfectly corresponds with earlier portrayal of Greece as a swift leopard with four wings (Dan 7:6). With unparalleled swiftness and effectiveness the ram, identified as Grecia, moved across the globe, subjugating other kingdoms to itself. It could not be hindered, and none could stand before it.

A NOTABLE HORN BETWEEN HIS EYES

“... and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.” Other versions read, “had a conspicuous horn between his eyes,”^{NASB} “a prominent horn,”^{NIV} “a great horn,”^{BBE} “majestic horn,”^{NJB} and “one very large horn.”^{NLT}

Later, this horn is specifically identified. “... and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king” (8:21b).

The “first king” of mention is **Alexander the Great**, who ran roughshod over Persia, occupying an even greater dominion than that of the unprecedented Medo-Persian empire. Alexander, who himself claimed to be the “son of Jupiter-Ammon,” included the ram’s horn as part of a medallion he made of himself.



Alexander

The swiftness with which Alexander swept across the world is still the object of military inquiry. Within seven years, he conquered the entire world, completing the feat before was thirty-three years of age. He was king of Macedonia from 336-323 B.C.

AN OBSERVATION

Something of the Divine manner is seen in this revelation. The fate of all four of the kingdoms of reference (Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman) was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar. The demise of the Babylonian kingdom was revealed to Belshazzar. Some limited revelation of the rise of the Greek empire was revealed to Darius during the reign of the Medes and the Persians (Dan 11). **However, no revelation was given to the Greeks or the Romans.** Everything pertaining to their rise and fall was revealed to Daniel, but nothing to Alexander or any succeeding rulers. That was because there was no known prophet in their days. God, we are told, “will do nothing, but He revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). There were no prophets during the period in which these kingdoms rose to prominence. Therefore, God revealed their destiny to a prophet living prior to their inception.

It ought to be noted that, according to Amos’ statement (3:7), **the very fact that God revealed the destiny of these empires confirms that He was the One doing these things.** God reveals what He is doing, not merely what will occur in time. He is the One who is governing the world.

There is something else to be noted here concerning life in this world. **There is no guarantee of prolonged safety to those remaining “in the body.”** Those who boast of Divine protection in the flesh are not thinking clearly.

☐ The hand of the Lord is often used for chastening as well as for protection – and His people are sometimes caught in the maelstrom of such judgments. Daniel himself is a case in point, personally affected by the judgment of the Babylonian captivity.

☐ There are also famines and pestilence

THE SWIFTNES WITH WHICH ALEXANDER SWEEP ACROSS THE WORLD IS STILL THE OBJECT OF MILITARY INQUIRY. WITHIN SEVEN YEARS, HE CONQUERED THE ENTIRE WORLD, COMPLETING THE FEAT BEFORE WAS THIRTY-THREE YEARS OF AGE.

that come upon the earth that effect the people of God. Famines during the time of Abraham (Gen 12:10), Isaac (Gen 26:1), Jacob (Gen 42:1-2), David (2 Sam 21:1), and Elijah (1Kgs 17:4-6) are cases in point.

- ▣ Jesus spoke of a tribulation that would be “shortened” “for the elect’s sake,” who obviously were affected by it (Matt 24:22).
- ▣ Jesus told faithful people to pray the destruction of Jerusalem, and their consequent “flight,” would not come

in the winter, or on the Sabbath day (Matt 24:20).

- ▣ The Lord also said, “And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!” (Mat 24:19).

Some believers are taught that they will be delivered from all calamity. Others are taught they will assuredly be delivered from the more severe hardships of life. Do not imagine that these heretical teachings are true, for they are not. The list of saints who endured hardship

because of the sins of others is massive to mention. Such saints range from Joshua and Caleb, to Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. It is inexcusable that such things should be unknown by those in Christ Jesus.

The people of God have not been guaranteed exemption from the social and political agitations, or the natural calamities, of this world. An honest heart will confirm this to be true. However, ultimately, they will be delivered from them all, and will possess the kingdom.

THE HE GOAT CONFRONTS THE RAM

“⁶ And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. ⁷ And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.”

Daniel has seen the Medo-Persian empire pushing the borders of its kingdom in an unprecedented way. It may have seemed as though it was invincible, particularly since it devastated mighty Babylon. However, as it is written, “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.” **On the other hand, the saints, who will eventually receive te kingdom in its fulness, have only to wait to receive it.** They do not push like the ram to obtain it. Therefore the Revelation adds to the statement just quoted, “Here is the patience and the faith of the saints” (Rev 13:10).

Now the ram will face one greater than it – the he-goat coming from the West. **Thus God is showing the limited power of earthly kingdoms.** They are not everlasting, and therefore always yield to another greater than

themselves.

ATTACKS THE RAM WITH FURY

The Grecian kingdom does not remain in the West, but asserts itself. It now focuses upon the powerful Medo-Persian empire. This is the kingdom of which it had been said, “no beasts” could stand before it, none could deliver out of its hand, and it did according to its will, and it became great (verse 4). Yet, all of this will now come to an abrupt end.

It is no wonder we are told, “It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes” (Psa 118:8-9). Again it is written, “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish” (Psa 146:3-4). One day the Persians could boast they were the greatest power upon earth. The next day they would be dashed in pieces by a superior power!

We must learn from this event not to boast about any government on earth as though it was superior – the greatest of all, and never to be overcome. The Ruler of all is God, who has given the entirety of His kingdom to the Son. Ultimately, the Son will give it to the saints, and they will possess the kingdom as “joint heirs” with Christ (Rom 8:17), sitting with Him in His throne (Rev

3:21). The knowledge of this should lead us to the unwavering understanding that no kingdom of men will stand forever. All the kingdoms of the world are temporary and vulnerable.

Ran in the Fury of His Power

“And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power.”



The he-goat, depicting the Grecian empire in general, and Alexander the Great in particular, engages in an initiative against the ram, depicting the Medo-Persian empire, with the Persians in dominance. Indidentally, the very first thing that is said of Alexander the Great in Britannica Encyclopedia is this, “He overthrew the Persian Empire.” BRITANNICA 2002

Our text says he came toward them “in the fury of his power.” Other versions read, “rushed at him in his mighty wrath,” NASB “charged at him in great rage,” NIV “ran at it with savage

After two years of relative silence, God resumes an explanation of the four kingdoms, by Given O. Blakely

force,"^{NRSV} and "rushing at him in the heat of his power."^{BBE}

Came Close to the Ram

"And I saw him come close unto the ram . . ." That is, the he-goat did not take the battle into a theater far removed from the Persian empire. He did not confront the ram in a valley removed from the heart of the empire, like the Philistines engaged Israel in the valley. Just as the Medes and the Persians invaded Babylon, the citadel of the Chaldean empire, **so they were defeated in their own territory and at the peak of its strength.**

Historically, this was a bold move. Under the reign of king Darius (not the "Darius" of Daniel) had conquered nearly the whole East. Darius had fortified the Persian empire with many different strong cities. These cities were spaced strategically so that every aspect of the empire was protected. It was generally thought that these cities were impregnable. For this reason, according to man's thinking, it was foolish for the ram to "come close to the ram," for it was surrounded by seemingly impregnable cities and a vast arm of men. **However, God was in this matter.** He was going to take the kingdom from the Medes and Persians and give it to the Greeks.

An additional consideration that highlights the significance of the triumph of Greece is seen in the distance between Persia and Greece.

It was a great distance, with many significant rivers and mountain ranges between the two. The distance between Macedonia (where Alexander started) and Persia was approximately 1,200 miles, as the crow flies. Yet Alexander overcame all these natural obstacles, and rushed against the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians. Getting to Persia was a feat of itself, to say nothing of conquering it.

Moved with Choler

" . . . and he was moved with choler against him . . ." Other versions read, "moved with rage,"^{NKJV} "he was enraged at him,"^{NASB} "attack the ram furiously,"^{NIV} "moved with anger,"^{ASV} "Moved with wrath,"^{BBE} "furiously enraged against,"^{Septuagint} and "becometh embittered against it."^{YLT}

The English word "choler" means, "the quality or state of being bilious (ill-natured disposition), a ready disposition to irritation." The Hebrew word used here included the idea of being sorely vexed, grieved, or provoked. It includes the idea of a bitterness – rage that causes strength to increase and determination to rise to a peak. Such rage and strength not only make the person aggressive, but shrewdly and confidently so.

The he-goat, therefore, was irritated with the ram, and provoked by his very appearance to wrath and fierce and aggressive anger. The he-goat does not seethe within, but comes at the ram in a determination to destroy it. Standing on the opposite side of the river, the he-goat leaps, as it were, across it in an aggressive attack of the ram.

Smote the Ram

" . . . and smote the ram . . ." Other versions read, "attacked the ram,"^{NKJV} and "struck the ram."^{NASB}

The idea is that of rushing headlong into the ram, butting it with his horn in a head-to-head confrontation. Remember, this is the empire that itself had pushed its borders wider than mighty Babylon, doing so with force. Prior to this confrontation, no "beast," or kingdom, was able to stand before it. However, as with Belshazzar, its days had been numbered, it had been weighted in the balances, and found wanting.



Broke His Two Horns

" . . . and brake his two horns . . ." Other versions show how the horns were broken by the fierce of the blow with which the he-goat struck the ram. "He struck the ram and shattered his horns,"^{NASB} "striking the ram and shattering his two horns,"^{NIV} and "struck it, breaking off

both its horns."^{NLT}

Both branches of the government were broken – the "Medes and the Persians." In other words, the empire was thoroughly broken, or decimated. In breaking the two horns, the Medo-Persian empire was brought to an end. It was, at that time, merged with the kingdom over which Alexander presided.

The Ram had No Power

" . . . and there was no power in the ram to stand before him . . ." The language means that the victory was easy for Alexander, or with little effort. It is as though he rolled over this mighty empire with little or no resistance. By comparison, Nebuchadnezzar required several campaigns before he finally decimated Jerusalem. Also, consider that it took mighty Rome approximately six years to conquer diminutive Jerusalem, which it finally destroyed in 70 A.D.

In the case of Alexander's conquest of Persia, however, there were both swiftness and ease.

Alexander's core army was exceedingly small, by way of comparison with the Persian forces. Yet, to this very day, the swiftness and expertise with which they fought is studied by military strategists. The following statement makes this known.

"With a good cavalry force Alexander could expect to defeat any Persian army. In spring 334 he crossed the Dardanelles, leaving Antipater, who had already faithfully served his father, as his deputy in Europe with over 13,000 men; he himself commanded about 30,000 foot and over 5,000 cavalry, of whom nearly 14,000 were Macedonians and about 7,000 allies sent by the Greek League. This army was to prove remarkable for its balanced combination of arms. Much work fell on the lightarmed Cretan and Macedonian archers, Thracians, and the Agrarian javelin men. But in pitched battle the striking force was the cavalry, and the core of the army, should the issue still remain undecided after the cavalry charge, was the infantry phalanx, 9,000 strong, armed with 13-foot spears and shields, and the 3,000 men of the royal battalions, the hypaspists."^{BRITANNICA 2002}

Confirming the above is general knowledge, Matthew Henry also says of Alexander's conquest of the Persian empire, "Alexander with his victorious army attacked

the kingdom of Persia, an army consisting of no more than 30,000 footmen and 5000 horsemen.”

The Ram Cast to the Ground and Mercilessly Stamped

“... but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.”

This is a depiction of the utter devastation and overthrow of the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. This was done during the prominence of the Persians, as pictured in one of the ram’s horns being above the other, and the bear lifting itself on one side.

The judgment of the Medo-Persian empire, when Persian was

allies to help to deliver him out of his hand.” MATTHEW HENRY

In order to further confirm the magnitude of the triumph of the he-goat, I include this most excellent synopsis of John Gill, Bible expositor and preacher from the 1700’s.

“... the Persians were smitten and routed by the Grecians: first at the river Granicus, where Alexander with thirty thousand foot, and five thousand horse, met the Persians, though more than five times his number, being, as Justin says, six hundred thousand, and got the victory over them; here twenty thousand of the Persian footmen, and two hundred and fifty of their horse, wereslain, and not more than thirty nine of the Macedonians killed: Plutarch says, it was reported that the Persians lost twenty thousand footmen, and two thousand five hundred horse; and from Aristobulus he

Persians lost ten thousand horsemen, and ninety thousand footmen: according to Justin, sixty one thousand footmen, and ten thousand horsemen, were slain, and forty thousand taken; and of the Macedonians there fell one hundred and thirty footmen, and one hundred and fifty horsemen; but, be it as it will, the victory was exceeding great, whereby the camp of Darius, his mother, wife, and children, and all his riches at Damascus, fell into the hands of Alexander, with all Syria. The third and last battle was fought near Arbela, or rather at Gaugamela in Assyria, when Alexander with fifty thousand men beat Darius with an army of eleven hundred thousand men; Plutarch says ten hundred thousand; forty thousand of which were slain, and of the Macedonians only three hundred or less were wanting; according to Arrian, thirty thousand were slain; but Diodorus Siculus says ninety thousand: this was the decisive battle; after this Babylon and Persepolis were taken by Alexander, and he became master of the whole empire...”

THE JUDGMENT OF THE MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE, WHEN PERSIAN WAS DOMINANT, FULFILLS A PRINCIPLE UTTERED BY ISAIAH.

dominant, fulfills a principle uttered by Isaiah. This word was spoken against the Assyrians, yet the principle applies to all ruthless empires who have expanded their borders by force. *“Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee”* (Isa 33:1).

“It was with the greatest violence that Alexander pushed on his war against Darius, who, though he brought vast numbers into the field, yet, for want of skill, was an unequal match for him, so that Alexander was too hard for him whenever he engaged him, smote him, cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him, which three expressions, some think, refer to the three famous victories that Alexander obtained over Darius, at Granicus, at Issus, and at Arbela, by which he was at length totally routed, **having, in the last battle, had 600,000 men killed,** so that Alexander became absolute master of all the Persian empire, broke his two horns, the kingdoms of Media and Persia. The ram that had destroyed all before him (v. 4) now is himself destroyed; Darius has no power to stand before Alexander, nor has he any friends or

says, that the Macedonians lost only thirty four men, of which twelve were footmen: and Diodorus Siculus relates that the Persians lost more than ten thousand footmen, and not less than two thousand horse, and more than twenty thousand were taken: according to Justin, of Alexander’s army there only fell nine footmen, and a hundred and twenty horsemen: others say, that, of the Macedonians, twenty five men of Alexander’s own troop fell in the first attack, about sixty other of the horsemen were killed, and thirty of the footmen; so different are the accounts of the slain in this battle; however, the victory appears to be very great, whereby Sardis, with all Darius’s rich furniture, fell into the hands of Alexander, and all the provinces of the lesser Asia submitted to him. The next battle was fought at Issus its Cilicia, where Darius had an army, according to Plutarch, consisting of six hundred thousand men; according to Justin, four hundred thousand footmen, and a hundred thousand horsemen, which was routed by Alexander; when a hundred thousand of the Persian footmen, and ten thousand of their horsemen, were slain; and only, on Alexander’s side, five hundred and four of the footmen wounded, thirty two wanting, and a hundred and fifty of the horsemen killed: here also the accounts vary; Plutarch says above a hundred and ten thousand of the Persians were slain: according to Diodorus Siculus, there fell of them a hundred and twenty thousand footmen, and not less than ten thousand horsemen; and of the Macedonians three hundred footmen, and about a hundred and fifty horsemen: according to Arrian, the

It ought to be noted that the whole earth is “full” of the glory of the Lord (Isa 6:3). **The earth is a theater in which God is revealing Himself, His purpose, and His great salvation.** It is a stage on which the drama of redemption is being unfolded. For those with eyes to see, the Lord can summon an earthly power to do his will with a mere whistle, as it were.

As Isaiah said, *“He will lift up a banner to the nations from afar, And will whistle to them from the end of the earth; Surely they shall come with speed, swiftly”* ^{KJKV} (Isa 5:26). Again, with that Divine whistling, He can gather people together and increase them. The prophet Zechariah confirmed this also to be true. *“I will whistle for them and gather them, For I will redeem them; And they shall increase as they once increased”* ^{NKJV} (Zec 10:8).

With care, we must not stand in wonder at the exploits of Alexander the Great, for he also became powerless, as will all earthly rulers. If we are to marvel, let it be at the working of the Lord, who used that ancient Macedonian for His own glory, giving him genius and military success, then taking it from him in the prime of his life. Alexander was but a pawn on the trestle board of Divine purpose – a mere incident in God’s workings in the earth. When he had served his purpose, his horn was broken!

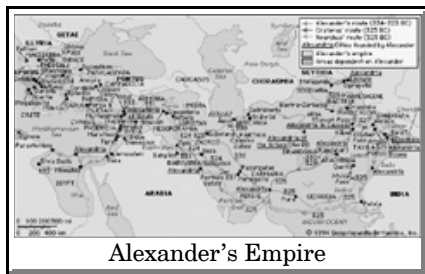
After two years of relative silence, God resumes an explanation of the four kingdoms, by Given O. Blakely

THE HORN IS REPLACED FOR FOUR NOTABLE ONES

“⁸ Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.”

THE HE GOAT WAXES GREAT

“Therefore the he goat waxed very great” Other versions read, *“magnified himself exceedingly,”* ^{NASB/RSV} *“grew more powerful than ever,”* ^{NJB} and *“hath exerted itself very much.”* ^{YLT}



The word “Therefore” means that following the crushing of the Persian empire, Alexander grew remarkably in power and influence. Other versions read “Then,” ^{NASB} or following the overthrow of the ram.

This greatness, however, involved the exertion of “self.” God gave Nebuchadnezzar power, but he exalted himself ascribing the greatness of his kingdom to his own accomplishments (Dan 4:30). Consequently, he was brought down. Although it is not specifically stated, this same principle must have been found in both Cyrus and Alexander. Flesh does have this tendency to exalt itself while enjoying visible success.

Alexander was about twenty years old when he began to reign. He was twenty-six when he overthrew the Persian empire. His kingdom then spread into the Indies, and throughout the whole world.

THE GREAT HORN IS BROKEN

“ . . . and when he was strong, the great horn was broken” Other versions read, *“as soon as he was mighty,”* ^{NASB} *“at the height of his power,”* ^{NIV} *“when he was at the strongest,”* ^{GENEVA} *“but at the height of its strength,”* ^{NJB} and *“at the peak of its power.”* ^{TNK}

The demise of the “notable horn,” Alexander the Great, occurred when he was at the pinnacle of his power. He was young (32-33 years of age), the ruler of the world, with everything apparently going his way. The word of Solomon concerning one froward in heart, who devises evil, was fulfilled in him. *“Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy”* (Prov 6:15). The power of Alexander did not gradually dissipate, or his kingdom slowly erode, and finally disappear. Rather, his reign was terminated suddenly when he was at the very peak of his influence.

It ought to be noted here that care must be taken not to boast in either success, or the ability to stand. As it is written, *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”* (1 Cor 10:12).

Let there be no mistake about this, **he was broken by God**, for the Lord alone *“removes kings”* (Dan 2:21). This is a prophecy of the death of Alexander the Great, given at least two hundred and twenty-five years before it took place. Because there was no prophet at the time to interpret what actually happened, the Lord revealed the matter to Daniel.

He then returned by land through Gedrosia, Karmania, Persia, and Susiana to Babylon. There the great horn is suddenly broken without hand. Alexander in B.C. 323, after a reign of twelve years and eight months, died as a fool dieth, of a fever brought on by fatigue, exposure, drunkenness, and debauchery. He was only thirty-two years old.

Expositor's Bible

Alexander did not merely die, he was “broken” – that is, his reign was terminated by the God of heaven. **Alexandere broke the horns of the Medo-Persian kingdom, but God Himself broke his.** Alexander was not murdered by an adversary as Belshazzar was (Dan 5:31). He was not violently overthrown like the last king of the Persians, Darius. He did not die in battle,

but in a bed. The Britannica Encyclopedia records the following of his death. “Suddenly, in Babylon, while busy with plans to improve the irrigation of the Euphrates and to settle the coast of the Persian Gulf, Alexander was taken ill after a prolonged banquet and drinking bout; 10 days later, on June 13, 323, he died in his 33rd year; he had reigned for 12 years and eight months.” ^{BRITANNICA 2002} **The heavenly perspective of that death is, “at the height of his power his large horn was broken off.”**

Countless books have been written about Alexander the Great. He is the subject of endless analysis by military strategists and historical analysts. However, when it comes to the Divine commentary on this impressive young ruler, our text uses 143 words! He is described as a great horn between the eyes of a he-goat from the West. He overpowered the great kingdom Medo-Persian kingdom, increased in greatness and strength, and was broken off at the height of his power. **From heaven's point of view, and all who live by faith as well, he was not truly great at all.** His kingdom, like all other kingdoms, was crushed by the kingdom of God!

It is no wonder that the Lord speaks so candidly to us concerning the fear of man. *“Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?”* (Isa 2:22). I do not doubt that many people sided with Alexander convinced his power would never cease. But it did cease, along with his influence and his very life. Believers must not be unduly impressed by the power of men.

FOUR HORNS COME IN ITS PLACE

“ . . . and for it came up four notable ones” Other versions read, *“in place of it four notable ones came up,”* ^{NKJV} *“in its place there came up four conspicuous horns,”* ^{NASB} *“in its place four prominent horns grew up,”* ^{NIV} and *“four other horns rose up in its place.”* ^{Septuagint}



By saying the four horns came up in the place of the one “notable horn,” the angel means the Grecian empire continued in the hands of other rulers, even though Alexander suddenly died. When the last king of Babylon was slain, the kingdom of Babylon ended. When the final king of Persia was killed, the kingdom of the Medes and Persians ended. **But the kingdom of Grecia did not end with the death of Alexander, its first king.**

These “four notable ones,” or horns, answer to the four heads of the leopard, which also depicted the Persian empire (Dan 7:6).

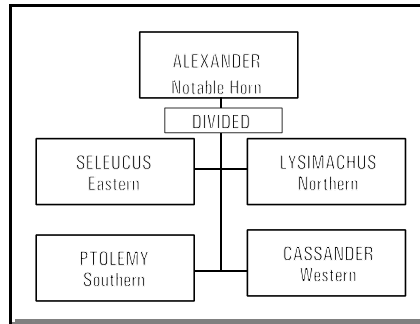
As history confirms, the “four notable ones” were Seleucus, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Cassander.

Seleucus ruled the Eastern part of the kingdom, with Syria and Babylon. Of him, the Britannica Encyclopedia says, “Macedonian army officer, founder of the Seleucid kingdom. In the struggles following the death of Alexander the Great, he rose from governor of Babylon to king of an empire centring on Syria and Iran.”

Lysimachus ruled the Northern part of the kingdom, including all of Asia Minor. Of him the encyclopedia says, “Macedonian general, satrap (provincial governor), and king who, as one of the *diadochoi* (“successors”) to Alexander the Great, came to rule strategic parts of the divided Macedonian Empire.”

Ptolemy ruled over the Southern part of the kingdom, including Cyrene and Egypt. Of him the encyclopedia says, “Macedonian general of Alexander the Great, who became ruler of Egypt (323–285 BC) and founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty, which reigned longer than any other dynasty established on the soil of the Alexandrian empire and only succumbed to the Romans in 30 BC.”

Cassander ruled the Western part of the kingdom, including Macedonia, Greece, and all of the neighboring countries. Of him the encyclopedia says, “Cassander was one of the *diadochoi* (“successors”), the Macedonian generals who fought over the empire of Alexander the Great after his death in 323. After Antipater’s death in 319, Cassander refused to acknowledge the new regent, Polyperchon. With the aid of Antigonos I Monophthalmus, ruler of Phrygia, Cassander seized Macedonia and most of Greece, including Athens (319–317).” BRITANNICA 2002



The details of the rules of these four men are not provided in Scripture. The Lord revealed enough about them, however, so that His hand in history could be recognized – a history that was moving toward the revelation of an “everlasting kingdom,” that would never be destroyed.

Toward the Winds of Heaven

“ . . . toward the four winds of heaven.” The expression “the four winds” generally denote everywhere, or from every quarter – like North, East, South, and West. Thus Jesus referred to the garnering of the elect as angels gathering “together His elect from the four winds of heaven, from one end of heaven to the other”(Matt 24:31). On this saying Mark reads, “gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of earth to the uttermost part of heaven”(Mk 13:27).

of the Grecian kingdom would be governed by four different rulers – yet the kingdom would remain a single one, and not four – like a leopard with four heads, or a he-goat that had four horns. **Second**, the divisions would be under the strict control of the Almighty God – “toward heaven.” The primary purpose that would be served would be His own, not that of the empire of Greece, or of Alexander the Great!

NOT THE END OF THE MATTER

Matters relating to Persia and Greece are of such importance that this is not the end of matter. More will be said about them later in this chapter (8:20-22). An extended explanation of the overthrow of Persia will be provided in the tenth chapter (10:13-20).

The struggle of nations for worldly prominence is being set within the context of the kingdom of God. The affairs of men are being proclaimed as under the strict administration of the God of heaven.

Daniel is receiving a revelation from God that accounts for the fall of empires, two of which Daniel will see in power (Babylon and Medes and Persians), and two he will not see (Greece and Rome). All of them were subject to corruption, and their values decreased as

THE DETAILS OF THE RULES OF THESE FOUR MEN ARE NOT PROVIDED IN SCRIPTURE. THE LORD REVEALED ENOUGH ABOUT THEM, HOWEVER, SO THAT HIS HAND IN HISTORY COULD BE RECOGNIZED – A HISTORY THAT WAS MOVING TOWARD THE REVELATION OF AN “EVERLASTING KINGDOM,” THAT WOULD NEVER BE DESTROYED.

One version reads “the four points of the compass.” ^{NASB} All of the other versions read “four winds of heaven.”

The idea presented in this expression is twofold. **First**, the entirety

they came. All of them were beastly, ruthless, heartless, and domineering. As they progressed they all tended to be divided, and as they divided they began to be weak. None of them could last any longer than appointed by God.

After two years of relative silence, God resumes an explanation of the four kingdoms, by Given O. Blakely

When God raised one of these kingdoms up, no one could withstand it. When He took them down, none could postpone their decline, or cause them to remain. There is a remarkable consistency in this truth that cannot be contradicted.

The understanding of these things will promote spiritual stability. It will

bring a peace that will keep both heart and mind, and liberate from debilitating fear. As with *“all Scripture,”* these things *“are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness”* (2 Tim 3:16). They have been *“written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope”* (Rom 15:4).

Of such texts it may very well be said, *“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall”* (1 Cor 10:11-12). Let every soul take heed to this record, for in it are morsels that will sustain the soul.

CONCLUSION

What a marvelous text has been placed before us. It covers things that occurred under Divine Sovereignty during a period of Divine silence – a period of over four centuries. During this time there was no **apparent** government of, or from, God. In this time, no ruler could claim to have received direction or revelation from God like Nebuchadnezzar.

during this time, as they were during the reigns of David and Solomon. They were not called into any significant projects, as they were in the days of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. They remained largely under the oppression others, and were not significant.

The Prophets were not present, as

among the people of God, like David triumphing over Goliath, the defeat of Sennacherib, or deliverances like that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace, and Daniel from the lion’s den.

Viewed from the standpoint of the flesh, it would appear as though God had abandoned the world. The heavens seemed to be brass.

Yet, God was ruling during this time, and do so in the interest of His people, and with a mind to fulfill His purpose. This long and dry period led to *“the fulness of the time,”* when God sent His Son into the world (Gal 4:4).

SOME OBSERVATIONS

Every person and kingdom that functions without a conscious fellowship with God tends to deteriorate. If, with all of his intellectual superiority and abilities to organize, Alexander could not last more than twelve years as a king, and thirty years as a person, who is the individual who will dare to boast of their own abilities?

The world is not a hodgepodge of unrelated people and things. There is a grand purpose, established by God, that is the blueprint for history. Everything is moving toward the grand culmination of that purpose.

In one short vision, a period of no less than two hundred and twenty-five years has been covered. It has been seen as rather chaotic from the human point of view, but orderly and timely from the heavenly point of view. That is why we can learn from what has been revealed.

Every person and kingdom that functions without a conscious fellowship with God tends to deteriorate. If, with all of his intellectual superiority and abilities to organize, Alexander could not last more than twelve years as a king, and thirty years as a person, who is the individual who will dare to boast of their own abilities?

No ruler could boast of being raised up by God, like Cyrus. No dignity received a sign from Godlike Belshazzar. Although the God of heaven was imminent in the affairs of men, it was not evident. It was a lengthy period of time during which no Divine commentary in Scripture was originated. **That, however, did not mean the things taking place at that time were insignificant.** Therefore, they were revealed to Daniel well in advance of their actual occurrence.

The Jews were not prominent

they were during the Judges and Kings, and even during the Babylonian captivity itself. If someone sought a word from the Lord, there was no Samuel, or Elijah, or Jeremiah present. No one was commissioned to do the work of like Zerubbabel, Ezra, or Nehemiah.

There was no noticeable representative of God like Daniel, who could stand and interpret what was taking place in the world.

There would be no harbinger like John the Baptist, and no mighty exploits

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 12/13/2002. We will continue in our overview of Daniel, reviewing verses 9-15 of the eighth chapter. The Lord now shows Daniel further things about the same kingdoms introduced in the second chapter. There are further particulars about the activities on earth that He wants Daniel, and the body of Christ, to know. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

*The Blakely Family: Given, June, Benjamin, Jonathan, and Eva
406 South Sergeant Street, Joplin, MO 64801*

A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

Telephone: (417) 782-3063, Email: Given (GivenB@aol.com) June: (JuneE01@aol.com)

ADAH's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/adah.htm> -- EVA's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/Eva.htm>

Benjamin (Bensvison@aol.com), Jonathan (Jonstalk@aol.com), Eva (EvaBlakely@aol.com)
Adah Hutchcraft (ALHutchcraft@milligan.edu), Jason Hutchcraft (hutchcraftj@esr.edu)

WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>

WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP Website: <http://wotruth.com/wotf/wotindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>

COMMENTARY on Daniel: <http://wotruth.com/Daniel.htm>