

The Little Horn in Daniel 8

or

The Horn that Grew Exceedingly Great!

Background

When Daniel got the vision, recorded in Daniel 8, he was working for King Belshazzar of the Babylonian Kingdom. The introductory comments to the vision are given in the first two verses. Verses 3-4 describe the world power to come after Babylon. This next power is symbolized by a “ram with two horns” and in Daniel 8:20 we are told that the two horns are “the kings of Media and Persia.”

Then in verses 5-7 we find the third world power described. It is portrayed as a “goat with a prominent horn between his eyes.” The Bible reader is not left in darkness regarding which power this is. Daniel 8:21 simply explains that “the shaggy goat is the king of Greece” and that the “large horn between his eyes is the first king.” We know that this king refers to Alexander the Great.

God gave me the idea to put the “Vision” and “Interpretation” side-by-side to be able to read the text “synoptically.” I found that to be very rewarding. It makes the understanding of the Book of Daniel easier. These first few verses of Daniel 8 fragmentally describe history as the story quickly moves from one world power to the next. (To see the vision and the interpretation side-by-side please go to my website: www.TobyJoreteg.com, click on “Articles” and then on “Daniel 8: Vision – Interpretation side-by-side.”)

Out of One of Them

At the death of Alexander the Great his kingdom was divided between four of his generals, described as “four prominent horns,” Daniel 8:8. These four kingdoms did not have the same power as Greece, (v.22) but they encompassed the same geographical territory. A couple of non-specific phrases describe the next power emerging. Verse 9 begins “out of one of them.” The interpretation says “in the latter part of their reign.” (v.23). Let us first look at Daniel 8:8-9:

*The goat became very great, but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven. **Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land.** (NIV)*

Other possible translations for the phrase “out of one of them” are: “Out of these” or “out of every one of them.” With this I conclude that it probably is not important to know which of the four horns that eventually became the next world power. Rather, out of ALL their territories came “another horn.”

Latter Part of Their Reign

Verse 23 gives more information about this next power, not so much about its origin but rather the timing, Daniel 8:22-23:

*The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power. In the **latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise.** (NIV)*

The first criterion is found in the phrase “in the latter part of their reign.” Thus, these four kingdoms need to come to an end before the next power emerges and will encompass their territory.

Rebels Becoming Wicked

The second criterion has to do with “rebels” that at some point would become “completely wicked.” It would take too long to do a complete study of the word “rebels” at this time. Let’s just conclude that some translators use the word “rebellion” and others “transgression” for the same Hebrew word. For example in Daniel 9:24, the Jewish nation is given 490 years to “finish rebellion” (or transgression). We are talking about the Old Covenant People. In Daniel 8:12 we find a similar quotation:

*“Because of **rebellion**, the host of the **saints** and the daily sacrifice were **given over** to it.”*

The saints here also refer to God’s Covenant People. Furthermore, the counterpart to “the host of the saints” in this verse is “holy people” in the interpretation (v.24). God set apart the Israelites as His Covenant People, a holy people, during the Old Testament time.

“Rebellion,” is the overwhelming theme in many of the prophetic books. Because of continued rebellion they were “given over.” Verse 12 in the quote above also gives us the timing for when this happened. We have already studied and concluded that the “daily sacrifice” was taken away at the cross. That was the time when transgression was finished and complete. The “rebels” who had become completely wicked must refer to God’s Covenant people. They demanded that Christ be crucified and boldly announced that “we have no king but Caesar,” John 19:15. With this statement the leaders of the nation rejected Christ and also the Father. It does sound completely wicked, doesn’t it?

At this time the third criterion, according to verse 23, would be fulfilled. It says that a “stern-faced king, a master of intrigue” would arise. We will come back to this king in another newsletter. We are building a puzzle putting one piece at a time together to finally give the whole picture.

Comparing the Little Horns in Daniel 7 and 8

Chronology: The “Little Horn” in Daniel 7, I believe, is the Papacy. To prove that would be too long of a study for this newsletter. It is, however, extremely important to notice *when* the “little horn” in Daniel 7 comes to power. Please note the chronological order in Daniel 7:

- 1) The lion as **Babylon**, Daniel 7:4.
- 2) The bear as **Medo-Persia**, Daniel 7:5.
- 3) The leopard as **Greece**, Daniel 7:6.
- 4) The leopard had **four** wings and **four** heads; the four generals, Daniel 7:6.
- 5) The fourth beast as the **Roman Empire**, Daniel 7:7.
- 6) The **ten horns** as the European States, Daniel 7:7.
- 7) The **little horn** came up *after* the ten horns and was *among* the ten, Daniel 7:8.

Let’s now look at the chronological order in Daniel 8:

- 1) Daniel lived during the time of **Babylon**, Daniel 8:1.
- 2) The ram symbolizes **Medo-Persia**, Daniel 8:20.
- 3) The goat refers to **Greece**, Daniel 8:21.
- 4) The **four horns** after Alexander the Great, Daniel 8:22.
- 5) The **little horn** that grew exceedingly great, Daniel 8:9

Interesting! Do you see that “the little horn” in Daniel 7 comes *after* the Roman Empire and *after* the ten horns had emerged? In chapter 8 “the little horn” comes after Greece and after the four generals! In the aspect of the chronological order – the little horns in Daniel 7 and 8 cannot be the same!

Geographically: The Bible does not describe “the little horn” in Daniel 7 to be a conquering power. It has its place “among” the ten horns. It uproots three horns with the help of secular powers, but remains in its place geographically. In other words, it remains small. In contrast “the little horn” in Daniel 8 grows exceedingly great to incorporate areas in “the south,” in “the east” and also “the Beautiful Land,” referring to Judea. Many believe the little horn in Daniel 7 refers to the Papacy but the Papacy has never thrived in “the south” (south of Italy) nor in “the east” and certainly not in Judea. Thus, geographically “the little horn” in Daniel 7 and 8 does *not* appear to refer to the same power! Let’s read Daniel 8:9:

*Out of one of them came another horn, a little one, which **grew exceedingly great** toward the **south**, toward the **east**, and toward the **beautiful land**. (NRSV)*

Its Earthly Power: “The little horn” in Daniel 7 remained “little” in earthly power. There are no indications that this power grew. In contrast, it is interesting to see how Daniel 8 describes the different powers using the word “great.” The ram “became great,” the goat became “very great” and the “little horn” became “exceedingly great.” In other words, “the little horn” in Daniel 8 seems to be the greatest of the four world powers! Measured by earthly power, “the little horn” in Daniel 7 and 8 are *not* the same!

Spiritually: From a spiritual perspective the two horns in Daniel 7 and 8 have some things in common. They both reject God as the highest authority. But there are some differences as well. “The little horn” in Daniel 7 attacked “set times and law” where as the one in Daniel 8 attacked the sanctuary.

Therefore, chronologically, geographically, spiritually and in regard to earthly power, I believe that it is convincingly shown that “*the little horn*” in Daniel 7 is *not* the same power as “*the horn, which started small*” in Daniel 8. Thus, *the Papacy has never been and will never become a world power* according to the Book of Daniel! Did you get that? There are only four world powers – not five! In Daniel 7:24 the “little horn” is said to be “different from the earlier ones” and this description fits well to the “little horn” as a spiritual power in contrast to the four secular world powers. The four world powers were interested in territorial control but the “little horn” in religious control.

Conclusion

The Roman Empire and not the Papacy is the fulfillment of Daniel 8:9. The Roman Empire was the horn that “grew exceedingly great.” This is supported by looking at the chronology, the origin, the characteristics, the directions of expansion and maybe most of all by the incredible growth of this empire.

This is the first round on the topic of the Roman Empire and the Papacy. Please be on the lookout for more to come.

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