

Study 10

A Clash of Kingdoms

Daniel 8

Gary DeMar

- I. In biblical terms, it is unnatural for men to be ruled by beasts (Gen. 2).
 - A. Man is to have dominion over the beasts; beasts are not to have dominion over man.
 1. “You shall not make for yourselves idols, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or a sacred pillar, nor shall you place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; for I am the Lord your God. You **shall keep My sabbaths** and reverence My sanctuary; I am the Lord. If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and no sword will pass through your land . . . But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments. . . . **I will let loose among you the beasts of the field**, which will bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted” (Lev. 26:1–6, 14, 22).

2. “Your carcasses will be food to all birds of the sky and to the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away” (Deut. 28:26).
 3. “Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather” (Matt. 24:28).
- B. There is a taming aspect to man’s dominion over the beasts (Dan. 6).
- C. Daniel 1–4 is a four-part story about the taming and training of Nebuchadnezzar. The duty of the people of God is to serve, instruct, but never compromise with the kingdoms of this world.
- D. Man is not to create a beast-kingdom.
1. The people want a king “like all the nations” (1 Sam. 8:5).
 - a. The nations are represented as beasts.
 - b. The people get a beast king (vv. 10–22).
 2. Smiley-Face Fascism (John 6:1–15).
 - a. Benito Mussolini (1883–1945) defined fascism this way: “The Fascist State organizes the nation, but leaves a sufficient margin of liberty to the individual; the latter is deprived of all useless and possibly harmful freedom, but retains what is essential; the deciding power in this question cannot be the individual, but the State alone.”¹
 - b. “Looking to the state for sustenance is a cultic act [an act of worship]; we rightly learn to expect food from parents, and when we regard the state as the source of physical provision we render to it the obeisance of idolatry. The crowds who had fed on the multiplied loaves and fishes were ready to receive Christ as their ruler, not because of who he was but because of the provision.

¹Benito Mussolini (with the help of Giovanni Gentile), “Fascism,” *The Italian Encyclopedia*: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/mussolini-fascism.html>

John Howard Yoder has rightly interpreted that scene: ‘The distribution of bread moved the crowd to acclaim Jesus as the new Moses, the provider, the Welfare King whom they had been waiting for.’²

- c. The sub-prime mortgage crisis the result of Smiley-Face Fascism: mandating that lending institutions make loans to high risk borrowers.

E. Christianity as a ministry of service and sacrifice.

- 1. Jesus comes as a king riding on a serving animal (Matt. 21:5).
- 2. Compare Revelation 13 (mark of the beast) with Revelation 14 (mark of the lamb).

II. Daniel sees two animals: a ram and goat.

A. They are not beasts this time, but sacrificial animals.

- 1. They represent Persia and Greece.
- 2. The flock of God, anticipating the New Covenant, is no longer only Israel but also the nations (John 10:16; 12:47–53).

B. While Daniel 7 deals with the four kingdoms and the setting up of God’s kingdom and the little horn that arises out of the fourth kingdom (Rome), Daniel 8 focuses on kingdoms two and three and the “little horn” that arises out of the third kingdom (Greece) (Dan. 8:1).

- 1. These animals are used in the Levitical worship system (Lev. 4–5).
 - a. The ram (male sheep) is required for the Trespass offering.
 - b. The he-goat is required from a civil officer.
- 2. What is the theology behind the imagery?

²Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction: Christian Faith and its Confrontation with American Society* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 183–184.

- a. The calling of Israel was to pray for and bring offerings near to God on behalf of the nations.
 - b. These animals deliver Israel from its captors: Medes and Persia (Cyrus) from Babylon (Belshazzar), Greece from Persia. Jesus (the lamb) will deliver all the nations.
3. The ram had two horns with one longer than the other typifying that Persia would be more prominent than the Medes.
- a. The ram conquers to the west, north, and south. Since it comes from the east it does not need to conquer the east.
 - b. The ram conquers and rules the then-known world (8:3–4, 20).
4. A male goat comes from the west as the ram came from the east, and they collide.
- a. The goat is victorious.
 - b. The goat's swift victory represents the amazing progress of the conquests of Alexander the Great: He seems to be flying (8:5) like the winged leopard of Daniel 7.
 - c. The great horn between the goat's eyes is Alexander himself.
 - d. The horn is broken quickly, because Alexander died at the age of 30.
 - e. Four new horns arose and took over Alexander's empire.

III. The Little Horn

- A. Similar to the "Little Horn" in Daniel 7, a "small horn" manifests itself arising from one of the horns of the goat (Greece) (8:8–9).

1. The small horn has designs on “the Beautiful” (8:9), most likely a reference to the land of Israel.
2. He rises in power so that he grew “up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth and . . . trampled them down” (8:10).
 - a. The heavens and stars are often symbols for rulers, either ecclesiastical or civil (see Judges 5:20; Isa. 13:10; Rev. 12:4).
 - b. It’s used this way in Matthew 24:29: “But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken” (see Gen. 37:9–10). This is a reference to the dissolution of the government—civil and ecclesiastical—of Israel in the first century in the period leading up to and including the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
3. He magnifies himself “to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down” (8:11). This is an attack on the temple and the sacrificial system. It’s reminiscent of 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4 where we read, “Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.”

4. God will allow this to happen “on account of transgression” from the Jews (2:11).
- B. Most agree that this small horn that arises out of one of the four horns of Greece is Antiochus Epiphanes IV—“The Shining One”—who ruled his part of the Hellenistic kingdom from 175 to 164 B.C.
1. A coin that bears his image and that of Apollo includes the following:
“Antiochus, image of God, bearer of victory.”
 2. As depicted in the [Books of the Maccabees](#),³ upon his return from Egypt, Antiochus IV organized an expedition against Jerusalem (the “Beautiful” land) and the temple. He captures Jerusalem and removes the sacred objects from the Jerusalem temple and slaughters many Jews. He then imposes a tax and establishes a fortress in Jerusalem.
 - a. Antiochus introduces Hellenistic culture; this process of Hellenization included the foundation of gymnasiums in Jerusalem.
 - b. Antiochus forbids circumcision and possession of the Jewish scriptures on pain of death.
 - c. He forbids observance of the Sabbath and the offering of sacrifices at the Temple. He also requires Jewish leaders to sacrifice to idols.
 - d. He had soldiers enter the Jewish Temple and slaughter a pig (which is impure by the Jewish law) on the altar of the Lord.

³The Books of the Maccabees are deuterocanonical books found in the Apocrypha giving the history of the Maccabees, a Jewish family who rebelled against the Seleucid dynasty and founded the Hasmonean Kingdom in Israel in the 2nd and 1st century B.C.

- e. They set the pig ablaze and then took the meat and tried to make some Jewish men eat it. The men refused and he cut their tongues out, scalped them, cut off their hands and feet, and burnt them on the altar of the Lord.
3. After this, the Jews began a war of independence under their Maccabean leaders, defeating the armies that Antiochus sent against them. Enraged at this, Antiochus is said to have marched against them in person, threatening to exterminate the nation; but, on the way, he suddenly died (164 B.C.).

IV. “The vision pertains to the time of the end” (8:17, 19).

- A. This is not a description of what happens in our future.
 1. There is no word in the Hebrew OT for “the future.”
 2. The fact that these events take place during the time of the third kingdom (Greece) shows that the “time of the end” refers to the approaching end of the Old Covenant Era and the soon approaching coming of the New Covenant.
 3. This is how the phrase is used in the OT.

In the Latter Days	Fulfillment
Genesis 49:1	Jacob’s immediate descendants
Numbers 24:14	David who crushed the Moabites (2 Sam. 8:2)
Deuteronomy 4:30	Assyrian and Babylonian Captivities
Deuteronomy 31:29	Period of the Judges and following
Isaiah 2:2–4; Micah 4:1	Period of the Messiah
Jeremiah 23:30; 30:24	Babylon
Jeremiah 48:47	Pentecost
Jeremiah 49:39	Pentecost
Daniel 2:28	Succession of world powers
Daniel 8:17, 19	Antiochus Epiphanes (175–164 BC)
Daniel 10:14	Cyrus to Antiochus Epiphanes
Hosea 3:5	Acts 2

4. The NT shows the time of fulfillment.

- a. “Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Cor. 10:11).
- b. “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world” (Heb. 1:1–2).
- c. “The end of all things has come near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer” (1 Pet. 4:7).