

• LESSON 9 (March 4) •

Daniel 8: The God Who Bestows and Breaks Power

BACKGROUND:

- This vision takes place in Belshazzar's third year (548-547 B.C.). God's Spirit takes Daniel to Susa, particularly to the Ulai canal, a body of water on Susa's northeast side. Susa was a fortress-city about 200 miles east of Babylon. At the time of the vision, it was the capital of Elam. Later, Susa served as the winter residence for Persian kings until Darius I made it his capital in 521 B.C. and built a palace there (Neh 1:1; Esth 1:2). Josephus later called Susa "the metropolis of Persia" (*Antiquities*, 10.269).
- Whereas Daniel 7 was a dream, this is described as "a vision." One of the reasons Daniel 8 is such a remarkable chapter is that it contains a very detailed prophecy concerning the fate of the Jews 400 years after Daniel.
- "The glorious land" almost certainly is a description of the land of Israel (Psa 106:24; Jer 3:19; Ezek 20:6, 15; Zech 7:14), the place the captives longed to return (Psa 137:1-6).
- We have already read about "holy ones" (i.e. angels) in Daniel 4:13 and 4:23. Gabriel is the first angel mentioned by name in Scripture (Dan 9:20-21; Luke 1:19, 26); Michael is the only other (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev 12:7).
- "How long?" is a frequently asked question in Old Testament poetry and prophecy (Psa 6:3; 80:4; 90:13; Isa 6:11; Hab 2:6; Zech 1:12; cf. Rev 6:10).

QUESTIONS WORTH THINKING ABOUT:

1. Thinking "big picture," what should we take away from the description of the ram in Daniel 8:3-4?
2. Thinking "big picture," what should we take away from the description of the male goat in Daniel 8:5-8?
3. Thinking "big picture," what should we take away from the description of great difficulty in Daniel 8:9-14?
4. Thinking "big picture," what should we take away from the explanation in Daniel 8:15-27?

CLOSING THOUGHT: "But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, 'Why have you made me like this?' Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?" (Rom 9:20-21)