

Daniel Chapter 8

The Ram and the Goat

Animals fighting it out.

- Heaven's picture of two world powers.

The Rise of the Persian and Greek Empires
(The Bear and the Leopard of the previous vision)



The Vision – the time

In the third year of King Belshazzar`s reign, I, Daniel, had a vision, after the one that had already appeared to me.

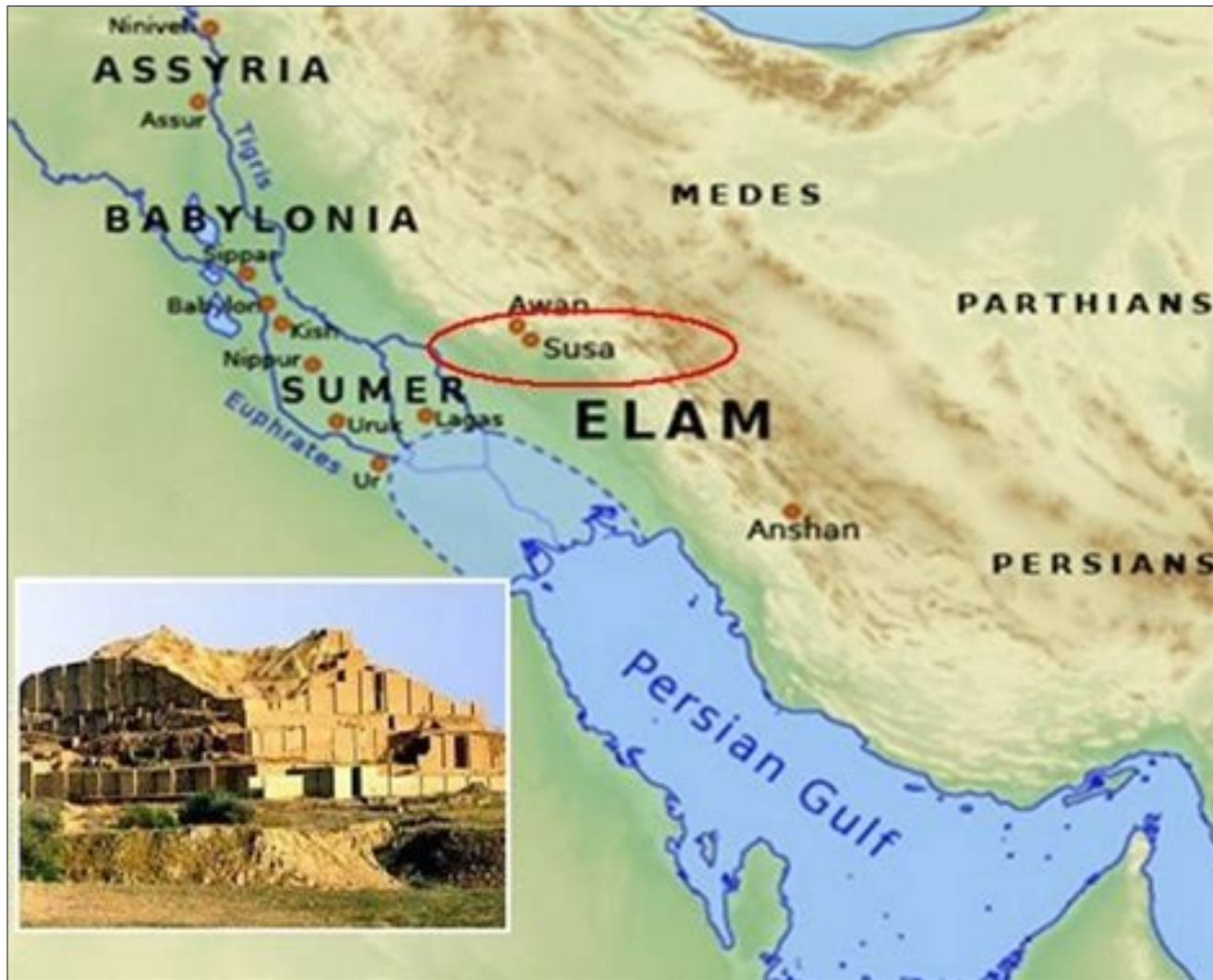
This happened about 2 years after the first, in around 550BC. Daniel describes it as a vision (in a dream?) This is prophecy and occurs before the fall of Babylon under the Medo-Persian rulers.



The Vision – the location

In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal.

He gives his location in the city by the canal.



The Vision

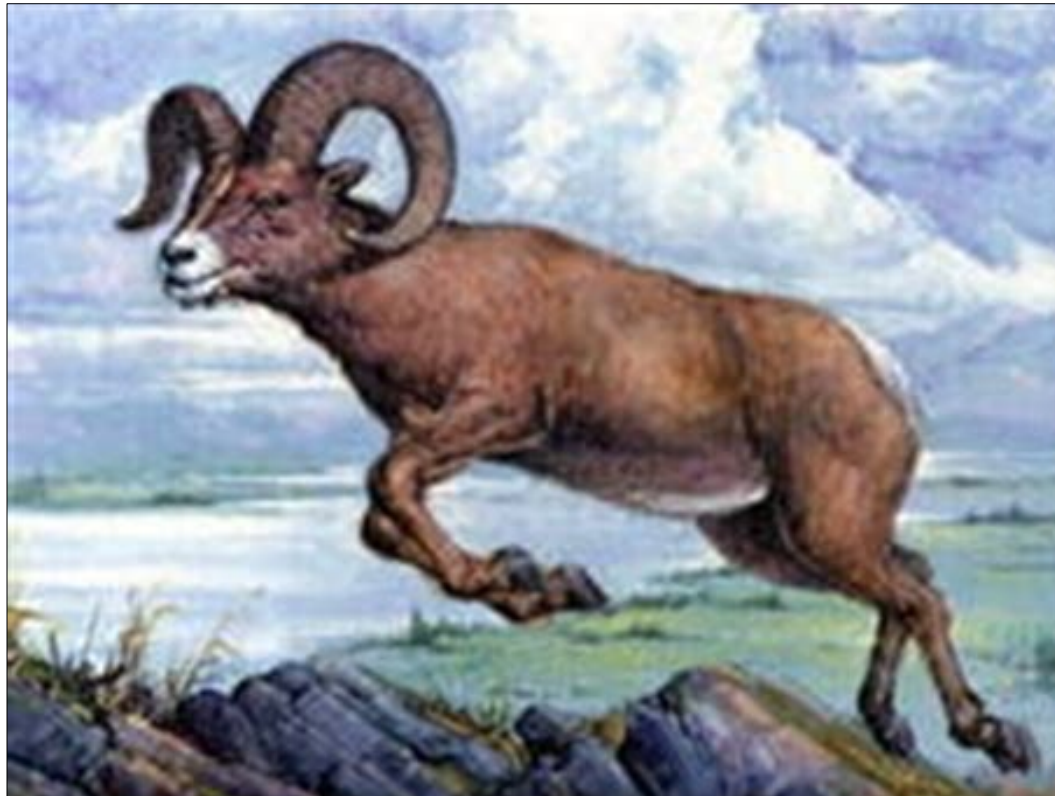
I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later.



The ram had taken possession of the area.
This was the alliance of the Medes and Persians

The Vision

I watched the ram as he charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him, and none could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great.



It was :-

Conqueror of an extensive area - W, N, S.

Invincible for a time

Self determined - established

The Vision

As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between his eyes came **from the west**, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground.

One scene follows on another

A Goat:-

1 central horn

From the west

Charging at Top speed



This was the rapid emergence of the Greek Empire

The Vision – the battle

He came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at him in great rage. I saw him attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering his two horns.

He sees an angry charge at the standing ram
It broke its horns ie. shattered its power.



The Vision – the battle

The ram was powerless to stand against him;
the goat knocked him to the ground and trampled on him,
and none could rescue the ram from his power.

The Ram's rule is completely overthrown by a new ruler –
the Goat

There were none to help; neither its gods or human allies



The Vision – the victor

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.

It had a very extensive empire
But it was cut short when it reached the top
It later split into four parts - N S E W.



The Vision – a new horn

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.

One division starts small

Grows S and E towards Israel (God's description)



The Vision – a new horn

It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them.

This one had big ideas and aspirations and was hostile to the heavens and other leaders



The Vision – a new horn

It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host;
it took away the daily sacrifice from him,
and the place of his sanctuary was brought low.

He thinks of himself as God

He stops temple worship and sacrifice

He defiles the sanctuary - Temple



He appears as a forerunner for Antichrist

The Vision – the results : a time of great evil

Because of rebellion, the host [of the saints] and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.

People sinning → judgement?

Daily sacrifice was stopped – none to intercede

All reality is distorted – truth is lost



The Vision – How Long?

Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, "How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled--the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?"

An Angel asks a question for Daniel's benefit.

How long?

Daily sacrifice stopped

The abomination → desolation

Sanctuary desecrated

The people subdued, persecuted



The Vision – How Long?

He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings;
then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated."

About 6 years (the precise time is in God's plan)
THEN restoration.



The Meaning

While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man. And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, "Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision." As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate.

No explanation yet for Daniel.
He was trying to understand.
Work and revelation were required.

One angel (with a human voice – in order to understand the message)
The Angel was named Gabriel (mighty one of God)

In the awesome presence of Gabriel he falls down.



The Vision – the Meaning

While he was speaking to me, I was in a deep sleep, with my face to the ground. Then he touched me and raised me to my feet. He said.. "I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end.

Daniel became unconscious !

Cf John in Revelation 1

A mortal man can only stand so much!

The time of wrath

(of antichrist or of God's wrath?)



The Appointed time - It is set in God's plan for the end.

The Vision – the Meaning

"Son of man," he said to me, "understand that the vision concerns the time of the end."

‘Son of man’ addresses Daniel as a human being.
Understand! Application and concentration will be needed.
End time matters ... multiple fulfilments pointing to the ultimate?



The Vision – the Meaning

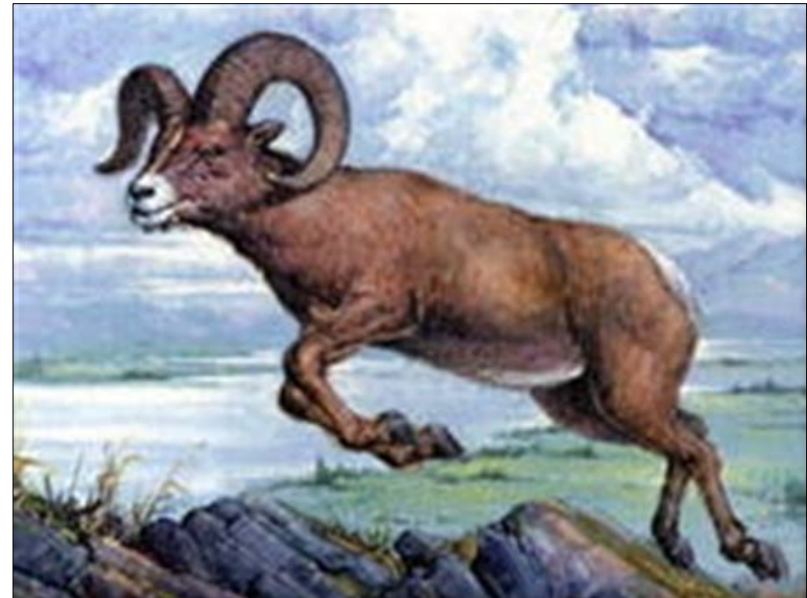
The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia.

Two kingdoms were coming:-

Ram (first) would be the Medo-Persian

“The ram was the national emblem of Persia, a ram being stamped on Persian coins as well as on the headdress of Persian emperors.”

The principle areas of their wars were against the SCYTHIANS, *northward*; against the GREEKS, *westward*; and against the EGYPTIANS, *southward*.”



The shaggy goat is the king of Greece,
and the large horn between his eyes is the first king.

Two kingdoms coming:-

Ram (first) the Medo-Persian

Goat (next) Greece

The large horn represents Alexander the Great (the first ruler)

'Between the eyes' suggests determined direction. He very quickly
conquered a vast area.



As God guided history, He used Alexander's passion to spread Greek culture to prepare the world for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Because of Alexander's influence, Greek became the common language of the civilized world - and the language of the New Testament.



Papyrus 52 is the earliest extant Greek New Testament fragment dating from the second century AD. It contains the text of John 18:31, 37.

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.

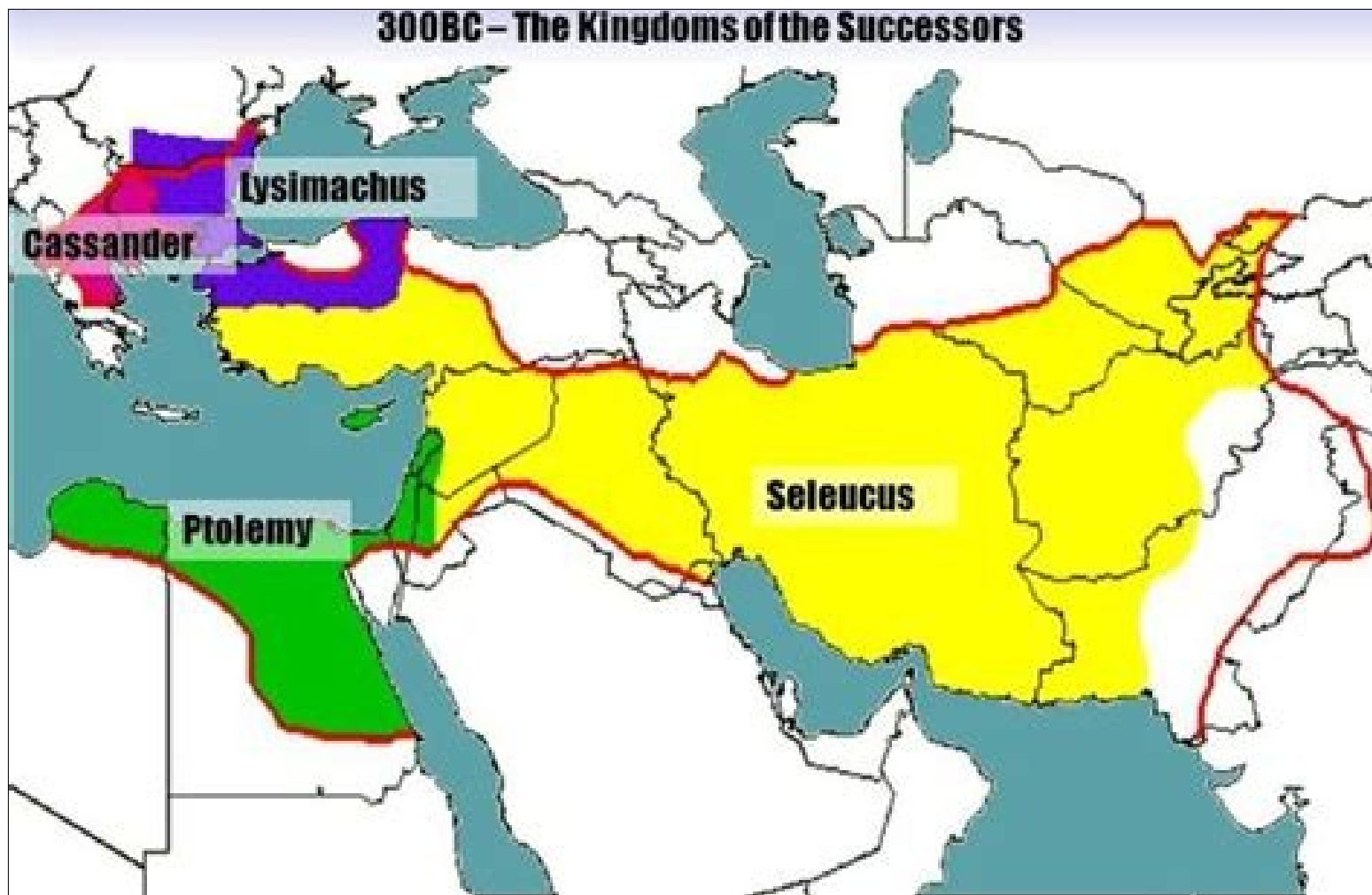
The Greek empire was eventually divided into four, but each of lesser overall power than the united one.



Alexander did not divide the empire among his four generals himself. His four leading generals divided it among themselves by force after his death.

The four generals were:

- Cassander, ruling over Greece and its region.
- Lysimachus, ruling over Asia Minor.
- Seleucus, ruling over Syria and Israel's land.
- Ptolemy, ruling over Egypt.



An Evil Ruler

In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power.

Later a new cunning King comes to power – ruthless, crafty and strong. He has external help (Roman ? Satanic?)





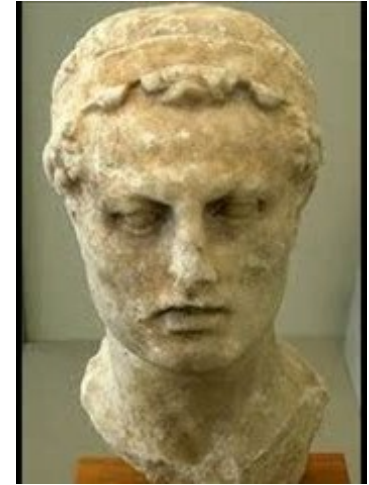
We can identify the historical fulfilment of this in Antiochus IV Epiphanes who ruled over Syria and Israel's land under the Seleucid dynasty.

i. Israel's land was contested between the dynasties of Seleucid and Ptolemy, but the Seleucids gained power over the region in the days of Antiochus III (198 B.C.).

ii. Antiochus IV gained the throne of his father (Antiochus III) by murdering his brother, the former king Seleucus Philopator.

Antiochus IV legitimized his rule mainly through flattery and bribery.

The first attack of Antiochus against the Jews of this time was to settle a rivalry for the office of high priest. A pious high priest, Onias III, was removed from office and was replaced with his brother Jason because Jason bribed Antiochus. Then in 172 B.C. another brother (Menelaus) gave Antiochus an even bigger bribe and replaced Jason. A year later Menelaus started selling many of the temple's gold utensils to raise money to pay off the bribe. Onias III rebuked him, and Menelaus had him murdered. Meanwhile, Jason gathered armies and fought against Menelaus to regain the office of High Priest. Antiochus Epiphanes came in to Jerusalem in 171 B.C. to defend the man who paid him a bigger bribe to be the High Priest.



“This was the reason why God set over them such a breathing devil, as was Antiochus, for a punishment of their open impiety and formal apostasy.” (Trapp)

The books of Maccabees describe how Antiochus persecuted the Jews. They describe his blasphemies. By some estimates he was responsible for the murder of more than 100,000 Jews.



Antiochus IV assumed the title *Epiphanes* meaning, “illustrious” and alluding to deity. The ancient Jews twisted his name into “*Epimanes*” meaning, “madman.”

Hellenisation

He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior.

He had a shocking effect and success.
Opposition to God's people and religion
Deceit was his norm – propaganda, lies etc
He thought his culture/ways were superior
Greek is the Best!

He set about the Hellenisation of the world
This ultimately led to the Maccabees'
rebellion and restoration of temple worship.
This is remembered at Hanukkah.



When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand
against the Prince of princes.

Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.

Many were taken unawares (feeling safe)

Resists even God

His end is coming

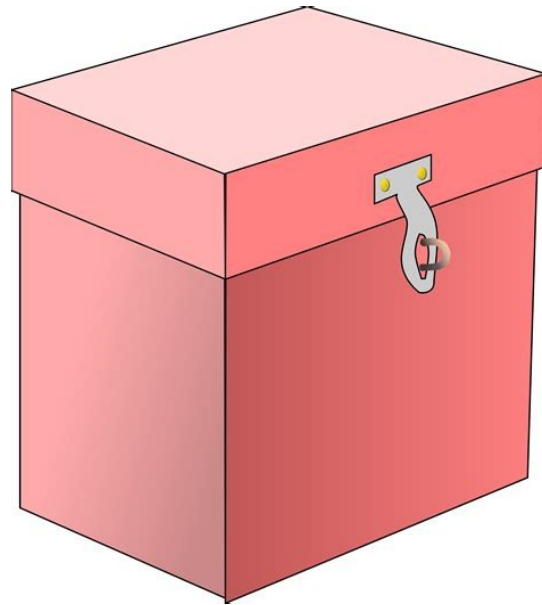
By God's judgement



Broken without human means: History tells us that Antiochus Epiphanes died of disease, not by the hand of man. In a similar way no *man* will defeat the coming Antichrist, but the hand of Jesus will strike him down (Revelation 19:20).

"The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future."

The timing will happen but not just yet for Daniel - wait
This information is for those when it arrives



The Vision – How Long?

He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated."

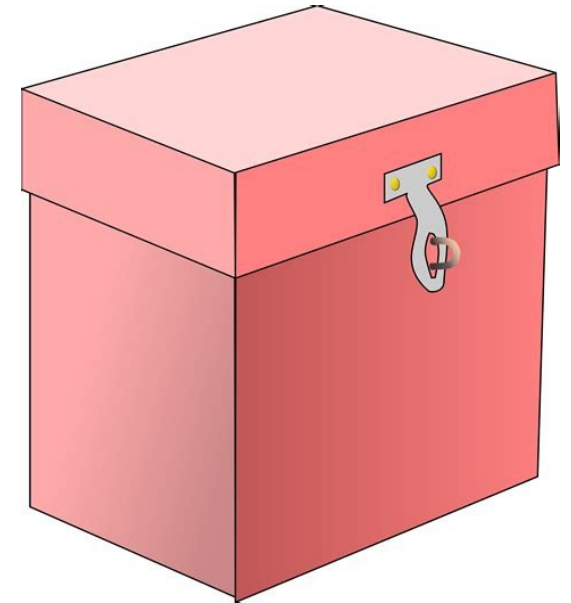


It could mean 1,150 days (evening and morning sacrifices) but it is more likely that this means 2,300 days. The date when the temple was cleansed by the Maccabees is well established as December 25, 165 B.C. If we count back 2,300 days from then, we come to the year when Antiochus Epiphanes began his persecution in earnest (171 B.C.).

The Vision – How Long?

Jesus also speaks of this vision with a future reference in His time.

In Matthew 24:15-16 *“So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.*



It is worth reminding ourselves: the time is *not* distant for us in light of Revelation 1:3, and the book of prophecy is not sealed, in the light of Revelation 22:10.

I, Daniel, was exhausted and lay ill for several days.
Then I got up and went about the king's business.
I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.

It was not an easy vision to take in!
He was exhausted and perhaps depressed at the
prospect of his people's suffering.
But it was back to work.

Something terrible to contemplate – mind numbing!



Habakkuk 3:2 O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.

Habakkuk 3:16-18 I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.

1 Timothy 1:7-8 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,