

# Daniel 8:15-19

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## *The Vision of the Ram and the Goat:*

*Daniel tries to understand the vision. He sees an angel in front of him, and a voice over the water of the canal commands this angel to interpret the dream for Daniel. Daniel is afraid and faints. The angel awakens Daniel and explains that the vision pertains to the end times.*

Chapter 8 of Daniel covers him witnessing a vision beside a canal. A ram with uneven horns (Medo-Persia) has appeared, butting against all creatures in his way. His violence was unstoppable until a goat (Greece) with a giant horn (Alexander the Great) appeared and shattered the ram's horns, proceeding to trample the ram to death. The goat is proud, yet as soon as he is victorious, his own horn breaks off, and four other horns grow from his head (Alexander's four generals). From one of these horns grows an arrogant horn who makes war against God and His people (Antiochus Epiphanes). This arrogant horn will desecrate the temple and halt the temple sacrifice that was at the center of Jewish worship for over six years.

As Daniel sees this vision, he understandably does not know what it means. As he *sought to understand it*, he saw *standing before him someone who looked like a man*. Daniel hears the *voice of a man between the bank of the Ulai*, speaking out over the water. The voice says, "*Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision.*" Gabriel is an angel, a messenger from God. He appears to Daniel again in Daniel 9:21 with words from God. He also appears in the New Testament to the priest Zechariah to tell him he will have a son (John the Baptizer, Luke 1:19) and to Mary, to tell her she will give birth to the Messiah (Luke 1:26-28). It is possible he appears elsewhere in Scripture, but these are the only verses where his name is given, *Gabriel*. *Gabriel* means "warrior of God."

Here *Gabriel* is commanded by a voice (perhaps God's own voice) to explain the vision to Daniel. So *Gabriel came near to where Daniel stood*. Daniel's reaction, understandably, is to feel *frightened* and to fall on his *face*.

Gabriel first explains what the vision was broadly about, "*Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end.*" It is interesting that Gabriel addresses Daniel as *son of man*. In the previous chapter the divine Messiah was said to be "like the son of man" probably referring to the fact that Jesus would be God come to earth as a human. Perhaps here Gabriel is elevating Daniel's humanness, since he is being shown things that are divine. The phrase *the time of the end* refers to *the end* of the current age. At the end of this age, this heaven and earth will be destroyed by fire and replaced with a new heaven and earth (2 Peter 3:12).

While *Gabriel was talking with Daniel*, Daniel kept his *face to the ground* out of fear, and *sank into a deep sleep*. This may mean he passed out or fainted from fright. Daniel is so overwhelmed by the vision and the fact that a messenger from God was speaking directly to him, that he was unable by his own strength to continue on with the vision. So God intervenes and gives Daniel

strength through Gabriel, because God wants Daniel to understand what he has seen. Gabriel *touched* Daniel and *made him stand upright*. This same situation happens in Daniel 10, where Daniel is visited again by an angel, possibly Gabriel, and he faints out of fear, and is given strength by the angel (Daniel 10:9-10, Daniel 10:19). These visions apparently take a great toll on mere men, even a faithful man like Daniel.

After waking Daniel and putting him back on his feet, Gabriel begins to explain the vision that pertains to the last days of this age. He says, “*Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end*.” During the *final period of the indignation* (also called the Abomination of Desolation, the transgression which causes horror, v. 13) Gabriel is going to explain *what will occur*.

This *pertains to the appointed time of the end* of this evil period which Israel will suffer, where Antiochus Epiphanes will oppress Israel and attempt to stomp out Judaism and the worship of Yahweh, the God of Israel. However, as Jesus Himself reveals, there is another *time of the end* where another *period of the indignation* will occur, another Abomination of Desolation perpetrated by another boastful horn (Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15). Most of this vision in chapter 8 seems to pertain to Antiochus Epiphanes desecrating the Jewish temple, but it serves also to foreshadow the antichrist’s defiance of God at the *appointed time of the end*.

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>15</sup> When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man. <sup>16</sup> And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulai, and he called out and said, “Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision.” <sup>17</sup> So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face; but he said to me, “Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end.” <sup>18</sup> Now while he was talking with me, I sank into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and made me stand upright. <sup>19</sup> He said, “Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end.**