***Daniel 8:1-12 Inthe third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me—to me, Daniel—after the one that appeared to me the first time. 2I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan, the citadel, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai. 3Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. 4I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great. 5And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. 6Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. 7And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand. 8Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven. 9And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land. 10And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. 11He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. 12Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered.***

We are in Daniel 8 tonight and have another prophetic vision before us. Like Daniel 7 reflected much of what Daniel 2 taught. Daniel 8 will reinforce the lessons from Daniel 2 & 7. The antichrist will be in view again. This is a common occurrence in prophecy. God communicates in multiple ways, multiple times, reinforcing the message so those receiving can prepare. He is sending urgent messages in many ways to our nation today. May we perk our ears to hear.

Daniel 8:1-2 *Inthe third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me—to me, Daniel—after the one that appeared to me the first time. 2I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan, the citadel, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai.* So we know that this is a second vision and still in the time of Babylon.This is 538 BC. The vision of Daniel 7 is now two years past. The vision of Daniel 2 is now many years past. King Belshazzar is in his final days. Remember that the Babylonian empire is crumbling around him, the courage and fierceness of the lion has now become as the heart of a man, selfish and corrupt. Territories have been lost. Babylon has been reduced to a lesser nation and the Medes and Persians are making headway in their war against the empire.

It’s in this environment that we find Daniel receiving a new vision with a repeat message.

Daniel is at the palace in Shushan, in the province of Elam, near the river Ulai. Given Daniel’s rank, it’s not strange that he should be there. Isaiah 21:2 concerns Elam *A distressing vision is declared to me; The treacherous dealer deals treacherously, And the plunderer plunders. Go up, O Elam! Besiege, O Media! All its sighing I have made to cease.* Isaiah is prophesying of the fact that Elam will revolt and join with the Medes, 150 to 175 years before the revolt took place.

Daniel 8:3-4 *Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. 4I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.* Daniel now begins to describe the vision he’s seeing. A ram – verse 20 next week will tell us exactly what this ram represents - the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. This vision starts with Babylon already having fallen. The ram has two horns, meaning two kings, one higher than the other. This is reminiscent of the bear, one side raised up. We know that the Medes and the Persians united to fight Babylon. The Medes were weaker and the Persians stronger, one horn being stronger than the other. Eventually, the kingdom became known as simply the Persian empire.

The ram pushed westward, northward, and southward. The Medo-Persian Empire conquered Lydia and Babylon to the west in 547 B.C. and 538 B.C., Egypt and Nubia to the south in 525 B.C., and the Scythians to the north in 513 B.C. No beast, no nation, could stand before the Empire. He did according to his will, as he chose.

Daniel 8:5-8 *And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. 6Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. 7And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand. 8Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.*We know that this word considering means watching intently. Daniel is watching the ram and, while he was watching, a male goat came from the west. Verse 21 tells is that this is Greece, coming from the west. Across the surface of the whole earth, meaning Greece would dominate the known world. The goat moved swiftly, touched not the ground, in keeping with the winged leopard from Daniel 7. We know that Alexander the Great conquered from Macedonia to India and south to Egypt in just 12 years. The notable horn is Alexander the Great. He came to the ram with furious power and rage. History tells us that there was no love loss between the king of the Persians and Alexander. The king of Persia tried to have Alexander assassinated. When the king sent an entourage to Alexander seeking terms of peace, a famous reply came from Alexander - "Heaven cannot support two suns, nor the earth two masters." Alexander destroyed the Persian empire. *Therefore the male goat grew very great –* Greece grew very strong under Alexander*. But when he became strong, the large horn was broken –* Then, at Alexander’s peak, he died at 31. Recall that, as he died, he said the kingdom would go to the strongest. A*nd in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven –* Verse 22 tells us these horns are four kingdoms, under four generals Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus, each taking a portion of the kingdom – north, south, east, west.

Daniel 8:9-11 *And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land. 10And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. 11He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.*Verse 9 has been interpreted to have a dual meaning. Many theologians see this little horn rising out of the Greeks. *And there came out of them a wicked root, Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king, who had been a hostage at Rome, and he reigned in the hundred and thirty and seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks*. Antiochus Epiphanes warred with Egypt to the south in 171 BC and forced Persia to the east to pay tribute. He sought to replace God in the Temple with Zeus in Israel, the Glorious Land. He sought to redirect worship and exalt himself over God. The host of heaven, in this case, is the same Hebrew word meaning attendants in the sanctuary of God, or priests. It is recorded that Antiochus did enslave and mistreat many of the priests of the Temple in that time. Antiochus removed Onias as High Priest and placed Jason, a heathen, in his place.

Other theologians write that this little horn comes out of the four winds and not from one of the four horns. It will be greater than the first three kingdoms. This is in line with the Roman empire. In Deuteronomy 28:47-48, Moses prophecies of a nation that will destroy Israel - *“Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, 48 therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you.* Rome is represented by iron. In 63 BC Rome conquered Israel. Persecution and cruelty towards God’s people follows. Eventually, Rome authorized the crucifixion of our Savior. The Kings of Israel are taken away. High Priests are puppets of Rome. *The place of His sanctuary was cast down*. Rome did indeed destroy the Temple in 70 AD. Since that time, a mosque has been built on the Temple Mount.

Finally, this is also interpreted to speak of the Antichrist, the little horn with pompous and blasphemous words. He too will reach south, east, and even into the Promised Land. The Antichrist will cast down mighty and holy people, the host of heaven. God’s saints will be trampled upon. He exalts himself as Prince over the Promised Land. He expects worship and praise to be given to him and not to God. Daily worship will be focused on him by the lost and deceived. Paganism and worldly worship will take over. Idols will stand where worship of God once stood. Pagan and Idol worship will become so intermingled with true worship it will become one in the same. We see this risk in our daily spiritual walk. Through the years, theologians have pointed to computers, government, the protestant movement, Islam, and other institutions as representing antichrist. In this case, this is Anti-Christ. The truly saved, those who know the Truth of Jesus, will recognize the Antichrist when he appears. God will not allow those in the palm of His hand to be snatched away. This is what makes the Rapture of the church such a welcome truth.

Daniel 8:12 “*Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered.* This Antichrist will be given armies and a huge network to resist those who continue daily in faith. Rome did this physically in the years it reigned. The Antichrist will use all tools to spread deceit and lead people away from the truth. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 tells us that. Internet, news media, false prophets, business, the ability to buy and sell, people who possess a form of godliness, but not the Truth of Christ. The Antichrist will seek to desecrate worship and everything God ordained in every way he can. It’s only through the Word and Prayer that we draw nearer to God, daily renewing our worship and sacrificing our lives to make the Truth of His Kingdom known while He might yet be found.

Daniel relates a view of the future provided by God Himself. Let us be thankful for his faith, focus, and fearlessness. As we study we learn. As we learn we see. As we see we apply. May we apply all we know to spread the Gospel of Jesus to a world lost and barreling toward the gates of Hell.