# Choosing Faith Over Compromise

## The Book of Daniel

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## Lesson 5: Daniel's Vision of the Ram & Goat



These chapters move from a vision of powerful empires to a prayer for mercy and a revelation about Jerusalem. As we study, we will distinguish what the text identifies directly from conclusions interpreters draw and consider how biblical prophecy should shape our prayers and faithful living.

### SETTING

Daniel 9:2 tells us that he learns from Jeremiah's writings that Jerusalem's desolation would last seventy years. Two passages supply the background:

- Jeremiah 25:11–12: Judah and the surrounding nations would serve Babylon for seventy years, after which God would judge Babylon.
- Jeremiah 29:10–14: When the seventy years were completed for Babylon, God would fulfill His promise to bring His people home.

Babylon's fall would therefore give Daniel strong reason to recognize that the promised restoration was approaching. The exact beginning and ending dates used to count the seventy years are debated, but Daniel's central concern is clear: God's promised time of restoration is at hand.

### READ DANIEL CHAPTERS 8 AND 9

**Daniel 8—God Reveals the Rise and Fall of Empires**

A. The ram represents Media and Persia (8:1–4, 20).

B. The goat represents Greece and its powerful first king (8:5–8, 21–22).

C. The little horn attacks God's people and desecrates the sanctuary (8:9–14).

D. Gabriel explains the vision and the downfall of the wicked ruler (8:15–26).

E. Daniel is overwhelmed but returns to his duties (8:27).

**Daniel 9—God Answers Daniel's Prayer with His Prophetic Plan**

A. Daniel studies Jeremiah's prophecy and turns to God in prayer (9:1–3).

B. Daniel confesses Israel's sins and acknowledges God's righteousness (9:4–14).

C. Daniel appeals to God's mercy for Jerusalem and His people (9:15–19).

D. Gabriel arrives to give Daniel understanding (9:20–23).

E. God reveals the seventy "sevens" concerning His people and Jerusalem (9:24–27).

## THE PROPHETIC NATIONS IN DANIEL 2, 7, AND 8

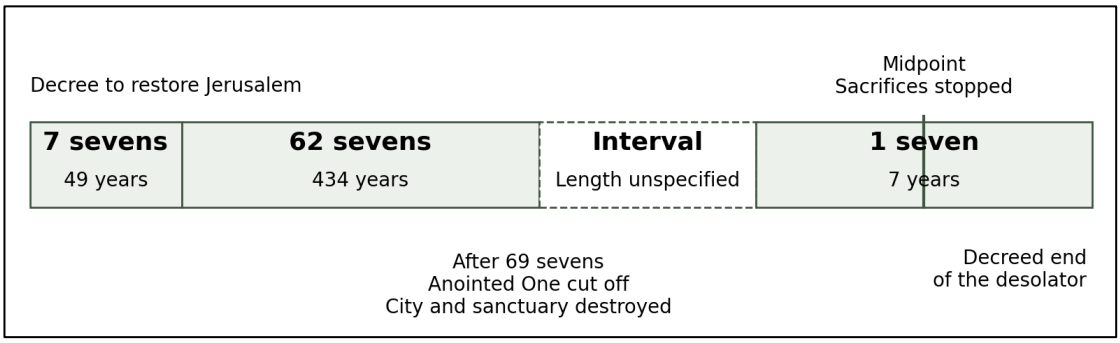
| Kingdom | Daniel 2 | Daniel 7 | Daniel 8 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Babylon** | Head of gold | Lion with eagle's wings | Not pictured |
| **Medo-Persia** | Chest and arms of silver | Bear raised on one side; three ribs | Ram with two horns; one higher |
| **Greece** | Belly and thighs of bronze | Leopard with four wings and four heads | Goat; great horn replaced by four horns |
| **Rome** | Legs of iron | Terrifying fourth beast with iron teeth | Not pictured |
| **Divided or final phase** | Feet and toes of iron mixed with clay | Ten horns; another little horn arises | Not pictured as a separate empire |
| **God's everlasting kingdom** | Stone becomes a great mountain | Son of Man receives dominion; holy people share the kingdom | No separate kingdom symbol |

**Reading the visions carefully**

- The little horns in chapters 7 and 8 arise in different settings. Do not assume they are the same ruler simply because they share a symbol.
- Some scholars identify the four kingdoms as Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece. The table presents the traditional combined Medo-Persian reading.
- The 2,300 evenings and mornings in 8:14 are variously understood as 2,300 days or 1,150 days of twice-daily sacrifices.

## THE PROPHECY OF "SEVENTY WEEKS"

Reading Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years, Daniel turns to God with fasting, confession, and a plea for Jerusalem. He appeals to God's mercy rather than Israel's merit. Gabriel then announces seventy sevens concerning Daniel's people and holy city. The chapter connects hope for restoration with the deeper need for sin to be dealt with and lasting righteousness established.




"Weeks" means units of seven. Taking each unit as seven years gives 70 × 7 = 490 years; 7 + 62 = 69 sevens, or 483 years. The above diagram presents a common futurist interpretation. It is schematic and not drawn to scale.

In this reading, the Anointed One is Jesus the Messiah; His death ("cut off") and Jerusalem's destruction occur after the sixty-ninth seven. An interval precedes a future final seven. Its ruler (Antichrist?) makes a covenant, stops sacrifice at the midpoint, and meets God's decreed judgment.

Interpretive caution: The passage does not explicitly state the length of an interval. Christians differ over the starting decree, chronology, the identity of "he" in 9:27, and whether the final seven is past, future, or symbolic. Some connect it with Christ's ministry and covenant work; others with events surrounding Antiochus or the future Antichrist. Exact modern dates should not be inferred from this diagram.

## GROUP DISCUSSIONS

1. What stands out most to you in Daniel Chapters 8 and 9? List and describe at least three things and why they stand out to you.

2. Why is it helpful to remember that harmful powerful rulers do not remain in power forever? Should Christians participate in the oevrthrow of such rulers?

3. Daniel Chapters 2, 7, and 8 all deal with God's sovereignty over empires (nations). Why do you suppose there is so much emphasis on this in Daniel?

## SUMMARY

Daniel 8 reveals the limits of arrogant earthly power. Daniel 9 shows a faithful servant responding to Scripture with confession and prayer as God unfolds His purposes for His people. Together, these chapters call us to trust God through opposition, seek His mercy, and study prophecy with humility and hope.

## HOW TO APPLY THIS LESSON

- Just as the Jews as exiles in Babylon were eagerly anticipating the return to their home in Jerusalem, we believers today can also anticipate the return of Jesus Christ who will take us to be with him in heaven, our eternal home.
- Let fulfilled biblical prophecy be one of your strengths in sharing the gospel with skeptical unbelievers.