

**Welcome to the  
Common Ground Café!**



**Sunday, March 4, 2018**

**Light for Your Darkest Times  
A Study of Daniel 8**

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What is the darkest, most depressing book you've read or film you've seen?

Daniel 8 is a dark chapter. It's a prophecy of the next two centuries that follow the Babylonian exile. Despite its bleak subject matter, though, hope cuts through like a shaft of light.

### **Point One: God's rescue will eventually break into the darkest of times like light**

Daniel describes a strange vision in 8:1-14. The interpretation is provided in 8:15-26. For our discussion, we're going to switch back and forth between these two sections.

#### **The Ram**

- ❖ Read verses 3-4. How was the ram described?
- ❖ Read verse 20. Which nation(s) did the ram represent?
- ❖ Do you remember from the sermon why one of the ram's two horns grew larger than the other?

#### **The Goat**

- ❖ Read verses 5-7. How was the goat described?
- ❖ Read verse 21. Which nation did the goat represent?
- ❖ Do you remember from the sermon who the "prominent horn" represents? (Hint: He was a young Greek conqueror.)
- ❖ Read verse 8 and then verse 22. After the young Greek conqueror died at the age of 33, do you remember from the sermon what happened to his massive Greek empire?

#### **Antiochus IV (Pronounced "Ann-TIE-oh-kus")**

- ❖ Read verses 9-12 and then verses 23-25.
- ❖ Some people who read this chapter wonder who the "starry host" are in Daniel's dream (verse 10). Compare verse 10 to 24. Who gets attacked in verse 24? Read Genesis 15:5. In light of Daniel 8:24 and Genesis 15:5, who are the "starry host" in Daniel's vision?

- ❖ Using your Bible app or the Bible Gateway website, look up 1 Maccabees 1:41-64 and read it. (The books of 1 and 2 Maccabees were never accepted into the Hebrew Bible, so we don't accept them as Scripture today. However, they are a useful source to understand Daniel 8. You will find 1 and 2 Maccabees in versions like the "New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition" (NRSVCE) or the "Catholic Public Domain Version" (CPDV) on your Bible app.)
- ❖ In light of 1 Maccabees 1:41-64, give a one-sentence summary of Jewish life under Antiochus.

### **The Light of God's Rescue**

- ❖ Read verses 13-14.
- ❖ What did Antiochus do to the temple that required it to be reconsecrated by faithful Israelites? (Hint: See 1 Maccabees 1:54, from your earlier reading.)
- ❖ From the following options, choose the best answer for the meaning of the phrase "2300 evenings and mornings":
  - It's a math lesson, and if we go to the right prophecy seminar, we'll be able to figure out the day and time of Christ's return.
  - God's in charge. He determined ahead of time both the rise and the demise of Antiochus.
- ❖ Read verse 25. Antiochus was destroyed, but "not by human power." There were Jewish freedom fighters who resisted his forces, but that's not how he died. Do you remember from the sermon how he died?
- ❖ What is the 8-day celebration that Jews observe to this day in remembrance of the fall of Antiochus?
- ❖ Did Jesus observe this celebration? (Hint: Read John 10:22-23.)

**Point Two:**  
**Stay faithful to the king's business**

Read Daniel 8:27.

According to the first part of the verse, what was Daniel's emotional reaction to this coming devastation?

This vision would come to pass a couple of centuries after Daniel's life. Why do you think God gave Daniel this vision before the Babylonian exile was even over and before the people returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple?

What tempts you to say, "I don't feel like adulting anymore"?

Though Daniel didn't feel like adulting, what did he decide to do according to the second half of Daniel 8:27?

Read Colossians 4:23-24. In light of that passage, who is really the king in the phrase "the king's business" in Daniel 8:27?

In your life, what "king's business" starts slipping when you get overwhelmed with life?

Take prayer requests and pray for those requests. But as you close the prayer, have everyone in the group recite Psalm 27:1 together:

The Lord is my light and my salvation—  
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life—  
of whom shall I be afraid?